



No. CCXXXIX.]

Contents

[SEPTEMBER 1902

PAGE

The Disentanglers 393
Chapter XI. (*continued*).—The Adventure of the Miserly Marquis

The Parliamentary Machine 423
By C. B. ROVLANCE KENT

My Old Album 433
Paraphrased from the French of JACQUES NORMAND

Cock Robin 437
By JOHN OXENHAM

A Shepherd of the Downs.—I. 452
By W. H. HUDSON

Prince Karl. Chapters IX.—XI. 465
By H. C. BAILEY, Author of 'My Lady of Orange'

At the Sign of the Ship. 479
By ANDREW LANG

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LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE.

SEPTEMBER 1902.

The Disentanglers.¹

XI. (*continued*).

THE ADVENTURE OF THE MISERLY MARQUIS.

III. A Romance of Bradshaw.

MERTON slept very well in the turret room. He was aroused early by noises which he interpreted as caused by the arrival of the London detectives. But he only turned round, like the sluggard, and slumbered till Logan aroused him at eight o'clock. He descended about a quarter to nine, breakfast was at nine, and he found Logan looking much disturbed.

'They don't waste time,' said Logan, handing to Merton a letter in an opened envelope. Logan's hand trembled.

'Typewritten address, London postmark,' said Merton. 'To Robert Logan, Esq., at Kirkburn Keep, Drem, Scotland.'

Merton read the letter aloud; there was no date of place, but there were the words:

'March 6, 2.45 P.M.

'SIR,—Perhaps I ought to say my Lord ——'

'What a fool the fellow is,' said Merton.

'Why?'

'Shows he is an educated man.'

'You may obtain news as to the mortal remains of your kinsman, the late Marquis of Restalrig, and as to his Will, by walking in the Burlington Arcade on March 11, between the hours of

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three and half-past three P.M. You must be attired in full mourning costume, carrying a glove in your left hand, and a black cane, with a silver top, in your right. A lady will drop her purse beside you. You will accost her.'

Here the letter, which was typewritten, ended.

'You won't?' said Merton. 'Never meet a blackmailer half way.'

'I wouldn't,' said Logan. 'But look here!'

He gave Merton another letter, in outward respect exactly similar to the first, except that the figure 2 was typewritten in the left corner. The letter ran thus:

'March 6, 4.25 P.M.

'SIR,—I regret to have to trouble you with a second communication, but my former letter was posted before a change occurred in the circumstances. You will be pleased to hear that I have no longer the affliction of speaking of your noble kinsman as "*the late* Marquis of Restalrig."

'Oh my prophetic soul!' said Merton, 'I guessed at first that he was not dead after all! Only catalepsy.' He went on reading: 'His Lordship recovered consciousness in circumstances which I shall not pain you by describing. He is now doing as well as can be expected, and may have several years of useful life before him. I need not point out to you that the conditions of the negotiation are now greatly altered. On the one hand, my partners and myself may seem to occupy the position of players who work a double ruff at whist. We are open to the marquis's offers for release, and to yours for his eternal absence from the scene of life and enjoyment. But it is by no means impossible that you may have scruples about outbidding your kinsman, especially as, if you did, you would, by the very fact, become subject to perpetual "blackmailing" at our hands. I speak plainly, as one man of the world to another. It is also a drawback to our position that you could attain your ends without blame or scandal (your ends being, of course, if the law so determines, immediate succession to the property of the marquis), by merely pushing us, with the aid of the police, to a fatal extreme. We are, therefore, reluctantly obliged to conclude that we cannot put the marquis's life up to auction between you and him, as my partners, in the first flush of triumph, had conceived. But any movement on your side against us will be met in such a way that the consequences, both to yourself and your

kinsman, will prove to the last degree prejudicial. For the rest, the arrangements specified in my earlier note of this instant (dated 2.45 P.M.) remain in force.'

Merton returned the letter to Logan. Their faces were almost equally blank.

'Let me think!' said Merton. He turned, and walked to the window. Logan re-read the letters and waited. Presently Merton came back to the fireside. 'You see, after all, this resolves itself into the ordinary dilemma of brigandage. We do not want to pay ransom, enormous ransom probably, if we can rescue the marquis, and destroy the gang. But the marquis himself ——'

'Oh, *he* would never offer terms that they would accept,' said Logan, with conviction. 'But I would stick at no ransom, of course.'

'But suppose that I see a way of defeating the scoundrels, would you let me risk it?'

'If you neither imperil yourself nor him too much.'

'Never mind me, I like it. And, as for him, they will be very loth to destroy their winning card.'

'You'll be cautious?'

'Naturally; but, as this place and the stations are sure to be watched, as the trains are slow, local, and inconvenient, and as, thanks to the economy of the marquis, you have no horses, it will be horribly difficult for me to leave the house and get to London and to work without their spotting me. It is absolutely essential to my scheme that I should not be known to be in town, and that I should be supposed to be here. I'll think it out. In the meantime we must do what we can to throw dust in the eyes of the enemy. Wire an identical advertisement to all the London papers; I'll write it.'

Merton went to a table on which lay some writing materials, and wrote:—

BURLINGTON ARCADE. SILVER-TOPPED EBONY STICK. Any offer made by the other party will be doubled on receipt of that consignment uninjured. Will meet the lady. Traps shall be kept here till after the date you mention.
CHURCH BROOK.'

'Now,' said Merton, 'he will see that Church Brook is Kirkburn, and that you will be liberal. And he will understand that the detectives are not to return to London. You did not show them the letters?'

'Of course not till you saw them, and I won't.'

'And, if nothing can be done before the eleventh, why you must promenade in the Burlington Arcade.'

'You see one weak point in your offers, don't you?'

'Which?'

'Why, suppose they do release the marquis, how am I to get the money to pay double his offer? He won't stump up and recoup me.'

Merton laughed. 'We must risk it,' he said. 'And, in the changed circumstances, the tin might be raised on a post-obit. But *he* won't bid high; you may double safely enough.'

On considering these ideas Logan looked relieved. 'Now,' he asked, 'about your plan; is it following the emu's feather?'

Merton nodded. 'But I must do it alone. The detectives must stay here. Now if I leave, dressed as I am, by the 10.49, I'll be tracked all the way. Is there anybody in the country whom you can absolutely trust?'

'Yes, there's Bower, the gardener, the son of these two feudal survivals, and there is *his* son.'

'What is young Bower?'

'A miner in the collieries; the mine is near the house.'

'Is he about my size? Have you seen him?'

'I saw him last night; he was one of the watchers.'

'Is he near my size?'

'A trifle broader, otherwise near enough.'

'What luck!' said Merton, adding, 'well, I can't start by the 10.49. I'm ill. I'm in bed. Order my breakfast in bed, send Mrs. Bower, and come up with her yourself.'

Merton rushed up the turnpike stair; in two minutes he was undressed, and between the sheets. There he lay, reading Bradshaw, pages 670, 671.

Presently there was a knock at the door, and Logan entered, followed by Mrs. Bower with the breakfast tray.

Merton addressed her at once.

'Mrs. Bower, we know that we can trust you absolutely.'

'To the death, sir—me and mine.'

'Well, I am not ill, but people must think I am ill. Is your grandson on the night shift or the day shift?'

'Laird is on the day shift, sir.'

'When does he leave his work?'

'About six, sir.'

'That is good. As soon as he appears——'

'I'll wait for him at the pit's mouth, sir.'

'Thank you. You will take him to his house; he lives with your son?'

'Yes, sir, with his father.'

'Make him change his working clothes—but he need not wash his face much—and bring him here. Mr. Logan, I mean Lord Fast Castle, will want him. Now, Mrs. Bower—you see I trust you absolutely—what he is wanted for is *this*. I shall dress in your grandson's clothes, I shall blacken my hands and face slightly, and I must get to Drem. Have I time to reach the station by ten minutes past seven?'

'By fast walking, sir.'

'Mr. Logan and your grandson—your grandson in my clothes—will walk later to your son's house, as they find a chance, unobserved, say about eleven at night. They will stay there for some time. Then they will be joined by some of the police, who will accompany Mr. Logan home again. Your grandson will go to his work as usual in the morning. That is all. You quite understand? You have nothing to do but to bring your grandson here, dressed as I said, as soon as he leaves his work. Oh, wait a moment! Is your grandson a teetotaller?'

'He's like the other lads, sir.'

'All the better. Does he smoke?'

'Yes, sir.'

'Then pray bring me a pipe of his and some of his tobacco. And, ah yes, does he possess such a thing as an old great-coat?'

'His auld ane's sair worn, sir.'

'Never mind, he had better walk up in it. He has a better one?'

'Yes, sir.'

'I think that is all,' said Merton. 'You understand, Mrs. Bower, that I am going away dressed as your grandson, while your grandson, dressed as myself, returns to his house to-night, and to work to-morrow. But it is not to be known that I *have* gone away. I am to be supposed ill in bed here for a day or two. You will bring my meals into the room at the usual hours, and Logan—of course you can trust Dr. Douglas?'

'I do.'

'Then he had better be summoned to my sick bed here

to-morrow. I may be so ill that he will have to call twice. That will keep up the belief that I am here.'

'Good idea,' said Logan, as the old woman left the room. 'What had I better do now?'

'Oh, send your telegrams—the advertisements—to the London papers. They can go by the trap you ordered for me, that I am too ill to go in. Then you will have to interview the detectives, take them into the laird's chamber, and, if they start my theory about the secret entrance being under the fallen stones, let them work away at removing them. If they don't start it, put them up to it; anything to keep them employed and prevent them from asking questions in the villages.'

'But, Merton, I understand your leaving in disguise; still, why go first to Edinburgh?'

'The trains from your station to town do not fit. You can look.' And Merton threw Bradshaw to Logan, who caught it neatly.

When he had satisfied himself, Logan said, 'The shops will be closed in Edinburgh, it will be after eight when you arrive. How will you manage about getting into decent clothes?'

'I have my idea; but, as soon as you can get rid of the detectives, come back here; I want you to coach me in broad Scots words and pronunciation. I shall concoct imaginary dialogues. I say, this is great fun.'

'Dod, man, aw'm the lad that'll lairn ye the pronounciation,' said Logan, and he was going.

'Wait,' said Merton, 'sign me a paper giving me leave to treat about the ransom. And promise that, if I don't reappear by the eleventh, you won't negotiate at all.'

'Not likely I will,' said Logan.

Merton lay in bed inventing imaginary dialogues to be rendered into Scots as occasion served. Presently Logan brought him a little book named *Mansie Waugh*.

'That is our lingo here,' he said; and Merton studied the work carefully, marking some phrases with a pencil.

In about an hour Logan reported that the detectives were at work in the secret passage. The lesson in the Scots of the Lothians began, accompanied by sounds of muffled laughter. Not for two or three centuries can the turret chamber at Kirkburn have heard so much merriment.

The afternoon passed in this course of instruction. Merton

was a fairly good mimic, and Logan felt at last that he could not readily be detected for an Englishman. Six o'clock had scarcely struck when Mrs. Bower's grandson was ushered into the bedroom. The exchange of clothes took place, Merton dressing as the young Bower undressed. The detectives, who had found nothing, were being entertained by Mrs. Bower at dinner.

'I know how the trap in the secret passage is worked,' said Merton, 'but you keep them hunting for it.'

Had the worthy detectives been within earshot the yells of laughter echoing in the turret as the men dressed must have suggested strange theories to their imaginations.

'Larks!' said Merton, as he blackened his face with coal dust.

Dismissing young Bower, who was told to wait in the hall, Merton made his final arrangements.

'You will communicate with me under cover to Trevor,' he said. He took a curious mediæval ring that he always wore from his finger, and tied it to a piece of string, which he hung round his neck, tucking all under his shirt. Then he arranged his thick comforter so as to hide the back of his head and neck (he had bitten his nails and blackened them with coal).

'Logan, I only want a bottle of whisky, the cork drawn and loose in the bottle, and a few dirty Scotch one pound notes; and, oh! has Mrs. Bower a pack of cards?'

Having been supplied with these properties, and said farewell to Logan, Merton stole downstairs, walked round the house, entered the kitchen by the back door, and said to Mrs. Bower, 'Grannie, I maun be ganging.'

'My grandson, gentlemen,' said Mrs. Bower to the detectives. Then to her grandson she remarked, 'Hae, there's a jeely piece for you'; and Merton, munching a round of bread covered with jam, walked down the steep avenue. He knew the house he was to enter, the gardener's lodge, and also that he was to approach it by a back way, and go in at the back door. The inmates expected him and understood the scheme; presently he went out by the door into the village street, still munching at his round of bread.

To such lads and lasses as hailed him in the waning light he replied gruffly, explaining that he had 'a sair hoast,' that is, a bad cough, from which he had observed that young Bower was suffering. He was soon outside of the village, and

walking at top speed towards the station. Several times he paused, in shadowy corners of the hedges, and listened. There was no sound of pursuing feet. He was not being followed, but, of course, he might be dogged at the station. The enemy would have their spies there: if they had them in the village his disguise had deceived them. He ran, whenever no passer-by was in sight; through the villages he walked, whistling 'Wull ye no come back again!' He reached the station with three minutes to spare, took a third-class ticket, and went on to the platform. Several people were waiting, among them four or five rough-looking miners. He strolled towards the end of the platform, and when the train entered, leaped into a third-class carriage which was nearly full. Turning at the door, he saw the rough customers making for the same carriage. 'Come on,' cried Merton, with a slight touch of intoxication in his voice; 'come on billies, a' freens here!' and he cast a glance of affection behind him at the other occupants of the carriage. The roughs pressed in.

'I won't have it,' cried a testy old gentleman, who was economically travelling by third-class, 'there are only three seats vacant. The rest of the train is nearly empty. Hi, guard! station-master, hi!'

'A' *freens* here,' repeated Merton stolidly, taking his whisky bottle from his great-coat pocket. Two of the roughs had entered, but the guard persuaded the other two that they must bestow themselves elsewhere. The old gentleman glared at Merton, who was standing up, the cork of the bottle between his teeth, as the train began to move. He staggered, and fell back into his seat.

'We are na fou, we're no *that* fou,'

Merton chanted, directing his speech to the old gentleman,

'But just a wee drap in oor 'ee!'

'The curse of Scotland,' muttered the old gentleman, whether with reference to alcohol or to Robert Burns, is uncertain.

'The Curse o' Scotland,' said Merton, 'that's the nine o' diamonds. I hae the cairts on me, maybe ye'd take a hand, sir, at Beggar ma Neebour, or Catch the Ten? Ye needna be feared, a can pay gin I lose.' He dragged out his cards, and a handful of silver.

The rough customers between whom Merton was sitting began to laugh hoarsely. The old gentleman frowned.

'I shall change my carriage at the next station,' he said, 'and I shall report you for gambling.'

'A' freens!' said Merton, as if horrified by the austere reception of his cordial advances. 'Wha's gaumlin'? We mauna play, billies, till he's gane. An unco pernicketty auld carl, thon ane,' he remarked, *sotto voce*. 'But there's naething in the Company's by-laws again refraishments,' Merton added. He uncorked his bottle, made a pretence of sucking at it, and passed it to his neighbours, the rough customers. They imbibed with freedom.

The carriage was very dark, the lamp 'moved like a moon in a wane,' as Merton might have quoted in happier circumstances. The rough customers glared at him, but his cap had a peak, and he wore his comforter high.

'Man, ye're the kind o' lad I like,' said one of the rough customers.

'A' freens!' said Merton, again applying himself to the bottle, and passing it. 'Onyither gentleman tak'a sook?' asked Merton, including all the passengers in his hospitable glance. 'Nane o' ye dry?

'Oh! fill yer ain glass,

And let the jug pass,

Hoo d'ye ken but yer neighbour's dry?'

Merton carolled.

'Thon's no a Scotch lilt,' remarked one of the roughs.

'A ken it's Irish,' said Merton. 'But, billie, the whuskey's Scotch!'

The train slowed and the old gentleman got out. From the platform he stormed at Merton.

'Ye're no an awakened character, ma freend,' answered Merton. 'Gude nicht to ye! Gie ma love to the gude wife and the weans!'

The train pursued her course.

'Aw'm saying, billie, aw'm saying,' remarked one of the roughs, thrusting his dirty beard into Merton's face.

'Weel, *be* saying,' said Merton.

'You're no Lairdie Bower, ye ken, ye haena the neb o' him.'

'And wha the deil said a *was* Lairdie Bower? Aw'm a

Lanerick man. Lairdie's at hame wi' a sair hoast,' answered Merton.

'But ye're wearing Lairdie Bower's auld big coat.'

'And what for no? Lairdie has anither coat, a brawer yin, and he lent me the auld yin because the nichts is cauld, and I hae a hoast ma'sel! Div ye ken Lairdie Bower? I've been wi' his auld faither and the lasses half the day, but speakin's awfu' dry work.'

Here Merton repeated the bottle trick, and showed symptoms of going to sleep, his head rolling on to the shoulder of the rough.

'Haud up, man!' said the rough, withdrawing the support.

'A' freens here,' remarked Merton, drawing a dirty clay pipe from his pocket. 'Hae ye a spunk?'

The rough provided him with a match, and he killed some time, while Preston Pans was passed, in filling and lighting his pipe.

'Ye're a Lanerick man?' asked the inquiring rough.

'Ay, a Hamilton frae Moss End. But I'm taking the play. Ma auld tittie has dee'd and left me some siller,' Merton dragged a handful of dirty notes out of his trousers pocket. 'I've been to see the auld Bowers, but Lairdie was on the shift.'

'And ye're ganging to Embro?'

'When we cam' into Embro Toon
We were a seemly sicht to see;
Ma luve was in the ——

'I dinna mind what ma luve was in—

'And I ma'sel in cramoisie,'

sang Merton, who had the greatest fear of being asked local questions about Moss End and Motherwell. 'I dinna ken what cramoisie is, ma'sel,' he added. 'Hae a drink!'

'Man, ye're a bonny singer,' said the rough who, hitherto, had taken no hand in the conversation.

'Ma faither was a precentor,' said Merton, and so, in fact, Mr. Merton *père* had, for a short time, been—of Salisbury Cathedral.

They were approaching Portobello, where Merton rushed to the window, thrust half of his body out, and indulged in the

raucous and meaningless yells of the festive artisan. Thus he tided over a rather prolonged wait, but, when the train moved on, the inquiring rough returned to the charge. He was suspicious, and also was drunk, and obstinate with all the brainless obstinacy of intoxication.

'Aw'm sayin',' he remarked to Merton, 'you're no Lairdie Bower.'

'Hear till the man! Aw'm Tammy Hamilton, o' Moss End in Lanerick. Aw'm ganging to see ma Jean.

' For day or night
Ma fancy's flight
Is ever wi' ma Jean—
Ma bonny, bonny, flat-footed Jean,'

sang Merton, gliding from the strains of Robert Burns into those of Mr. Boothby. 'Jean's a Lanerick wumman,' he added, 'she's in service in the Pleasance. Aw'm ganging to my jo. Ye'll a' hae jos, billies?'

'Aw'm sayin',' the intoxicated rough persisted, 'ye're no a Lanerick man. 'Ye're the English gentleman birkie that cam' to Kirkburn yestreen. Or else ye're ane o' the polis' (police).

'*Me* ane o' the polis! Aw'm askin' the company, *div* a look like a polisman? *Div* a look like an English birkie, or ane o' the gentry?'

The other passengers, decent people, thus appealed to, murmured negatives, and shook their heads. Merton certainly did not resemble a policeman, an Englishman, or a gentleman.

'Ye see naebody lippens to ye,' Merton went on. 'Man, if we were na a' freens, a wad gie ye a jaud atween yer twa een! But ye've been drinking. Tak anither sook!'

The rough did not reject the conciliatory offer.

'The whisky's low,' said Merton, holding up the bottle to the light, 'but there's mair at Embro' station.'

They were now drawing up at the station. Merton floundered out, threw his arms round the necks of each of the roughs, yelled to their companions in the next carriage to follow, and staggered into the third-class refreshment room. Here he leaned against the counter and feebly ogled the attendant nymph.

'Ma lonny bassie, a mean ma bonny lassie,' he said, 'gie's five gills, five o' the Auld Kirk' (whisky).

'Hoots man !' he heard one of the roughs remark to another. 'This falla's no the English birkie. English he canna be.'

'But aiblins he's ane o' oor ain polis,' said the man of suspicions.

'Nane o' oor polis has the gumption ; and him as fou as a fiddler.'

Merton, waving his glass, swallowed its contents at three gulps. He then fell on the floor, scrambled to his feet, tumbled out, and dashed his own whisky bottle through the window of the refreshment room.

'Me ane o' the polis !' he yelled, and was staggering towards the exit, when he was collared by two policemen, attracted by the noise. He embraced one of them, murmuring 'ma bonny Jean !' and then doubled up, his head lolling on his shoulder. His legs and arms jerked convulsively, and he had at last to be carried off, in the manner known as 'The Frog's March,' by four members of the force. The roughs followed, like chief mourners, Merton thought, at the head of the attendant crowd.

'There's an end o' your clash about the English gentleman,' Merton heard the quieter of his late companions observe to the obstinate inquirer. 'But he's a bonny singer. And noo, wull ye tell me hoo we're to win back to Drem the nicht ?'

'Dod, we'll mak a nicht o't,' said the other, as Merton was carried into the police-station.

He permitted himself to be lifted into one of the cells, and then remarked, in the most silvery tones :

'Very many thanks, my good men. I need not give you any more trouble, except by asking you, if possible, to get me some hot water and soap, and to invite the inspector to favour me with his company.'

The men nearly dropped Merton, but, finding his feet, he stood up and smiled blandly.

'Pray make no apologies,' he said. 'It is rather I who ought to apologise.'

'He's no drucken, and he's no Scotch,' remarked one of the policemen.

'But he'll pass the nicht here, and maybe apologise to the Baillie in the morning,' said another.

'Oh, pardon me, you mistake me,' said Merton. 'This is not a stupid practical joke.'

'It's no a very gude ane,' said the policeman.

Merton took out a handful of gold. 'I wish to pay for the broken window at once,' he said. 'It was a necessary part of the *mise en scène*, of the stage effect, you know. To call your attention.'

'Ye'll settle wi' the Baillie in the morning,' said the policeman.

Things were looking untoward.

'Look here,' said Merton, 'I quite understand your point of view, it does credit to your intelligence. You take me for an English tourist, behaving as I have done by way of a joke, or for a bet?'

'That's it, sir,' said the spokesman.

'Well, it does look like that. But which of you is the senior officer here?'

'Me, sir,' said the last speaker.

'Very well, if you can be so kind as to call the officer in charge of the station, or even one of senior standing—the higher the better—I can satisfy him as to my identity, and as to my reasons for behaving as I have done. I assure you that it is a matter of the very gravest importance. If the inspector, when he has seen me, permits, I have no objections to you, or to all of you, hearing what I have to say. But you will understand that this is a matter for his own discretion. If I were merely playing the fool, you must see that I have nothing to gain by giving additional annoyance and offence.'

'Very well, sir, I will bring the officer in charge,' said the policeman.

'Just tell him about my arrest and so on,' said Merton.

In a few minutes he returned with his superior.

'Well, my man, what's a' this about?' said that officer sternly.

'If you can give me an interview, alone, for five minutes, I shall enlighten you,' said Merton.

The officer was a huge and stalwart man. He threw his eye over Merton. 'Wait in the yaird,' he said to his minions, who retreated rather reluctantly. 'Weel, speak up,' said the officer.

'It is the body-snatching case at Kirkburn,' said Merton.

'Do ye mean that ye're an English detective?'

'No, merely a friend of Mr. Logan's, who left Kirkburn this evening. I have business to do for him in London in connection with the case—business that nobody can do but myself—and the

house was watched. I escaped in the disguise which you see me wearing, and had to throw off a gang of ruffians that accompanied me in the train by pretending to be drunk. I could only shake them off and destroy the suspicions which they expressed by getting arrested.'

'It's a queer story,' said the policeman.

'It is a queer story, but, speaking without knowledge, I think your best plan is to summon the chief of your detective department; I need his assistance. And I can prove my identity to him—to *you*, if you like, but you know best what is official etiquette.'

'I'll telephone for him, sir.'

'You are very obliging. All this is confidential, you know. Expense is no object to Mr. Logan, and he will not be ungrateful if strict secrecy is preserved. But, of all things, I want a wash.'

'All right, sir,' said the policeman, and in a few minutes Merton's head, hands, and neck were restored to their pristine propriety.

'No more kailyard talk for me,' he thought, with satisfaction.

The head of the detective department arrived in no long time. He was in evening dress. Merton rose and bowed.

'What's your story, sir?' the chief asked; 'it has brought me from a dinner party at my own house.'

'I deeply regret it,' said Merton, 'though, for my purpose, it is the merest providence.'

'What do you mean, sir?'

'Your subordinate has doubtless told you all that I told him?'

The chief nodded.

'Do you—I mean as an official—believe me?'

'I would be glad of proof of your personal identity.'

'That is easily given. You may know Mr. Lumley, the Professor of Toxicology in the University here?'

'I have met him often on matters of our business.'

'He is an old college friend of mine, and can remove any doubts you may entertain. His wife is a tall woman luckily,' added Merton to himself, much to the chief's bewilderment.

'Mr. Lumley's word would quite satisfy me,' said the chief.

'Very well, pray lend me your attention. This affair——'

'The body-snatching at Kirkburn?' asked the chief.

'Exactly,' said Merton. 'This affair is very well organised. Your house is probably being observed. Now what I propose

is *this*. I can go nowhere dressed as I am. You will, if you please, first send a constable, in uniform, to your house with orders to wait till you return. Next, I shall dress, by your permission, in any spare uniform you may have here, and in that costume I shall leave this office and accompany you to your house in a closed cab. You will enter it, bring out a hat and cloak, come into the cab, and I shall put them on, leaving my policeman's helmet in the cab, which will wait. Then, minutes later, the constable will come out, take the cab, and drive to any police office you please. Once within your house, I shall exchange my uniform for any old evening suit you may be able to lend me, and, when your guests have departed, you and I will drive together to Professor Lumley's, where he will identify me. After that, my course is perfectly clear, and I need give you no further trouble.'

'It is too complicated, sir,' said the chief, smiling. 'I don't know your name?'

'Merton,' said our hero; 'and yours?'

'Macnab. I can lend you a plain suit of morning clothes from here, and we don't want the stratagem of the constable. You don't even need the extra trouble of putting on evening dress in my house.'

'How very fortunate,' said Merton, and in a quarter of an hour he was attired as a simple citizen, and was driving to the house of Mr. Macnab. Here he was merely introduced to the guests—it was a men's party—as a gentleman from England on business. The guests had too much tact to tarry long, and by eleven o'clock the chief and Merton were ringing at the door bell of Professor Lumley. The servant knew both of them, and ushered them into the professor's study. He was reading examination papers. Mrs. Lumley had not returned from a party. Lumley greeted Merton warmly.

'I am passing through Edinburgh, and thought I might find you at home,' Merton said.

'Mr. Macnab,' said Lumley, shaking hands with the chief, 'you have not taken my friend into custody?'

'No, professor; Mr. Merton will tell you that he is released, and I'll be going home.'

'You won't stop and smoke?'

'No, I should be *de trop*,' answered the chief; 'good night, professor; good night, Mr. Merton.'

'But the broken window?'

'Oh, we'll settle that, and let you have the bill.'

Merton gave his club address, and the chief shook hands and departed.

'Now, what *have* you been doing, Merton?' asked Lumley.

Merton briefly explained the whole set of circumstances, and added, 'Now, Lumley, you are my sole hope. You can give me a bed to-night?'

'With all the pleasure in the world.'

'And lend me a set of Mrs. Lumley's raiment and a lady's portmanteau?'

'Are you quite mad?'

'No, but I must get to London undiscovered, and, for certain reasons, with which I need not trouble you, that is absolutely the only possible way. You remember, at Oxford, I made up fairly well for female parts.'

'Is there absolutely no other way?'

'None; I have tried every conceivable plan, mentally. Mourning is best, and a veil.'

At this moment Mrs. Lumley's cab was heard, returning from her party.

'Run down and break it to Mrs. Lumley,' said Merton. 'Luckily we have often acted together.'

'Luckily you are a favourite of hers,' said Lumley.

In ten minutes the pair entered the study. Mrs. Lumley, a tall lady, as Merton had said, came in, laughing and blushing.

'I shall drive with you myself to the train. My maid must be in the secret,' she said.

'She is an old acquaintance of mine,' said Merton. 'But I think you had better not come with me to the station. Nobody is likely to see me, leaving your house about nine, with my veil down. But, if anyone *does* see me, he must take me for you.'

'Oh, it is I who am running up to town incognita?'

'For a day or two—you will lend me a portmanteau to give local colour?'

'With pleasure,' said Mrs. Lumley.

'And Lumley will telegraph to Trevor to meet you at King's Cross, with his brougham, at 6.15 P.M.?'

This also was agreed to, and so ended this romance of Bradshaw.

IV. *Greek meets Greek.*

At about twenty-five minutes to seven, on March 7, the express entered King's Cross. A lady of fashionable appearance, with her veil down, gazed anxiously out of the window of a reserved carriage. She presently detected the person for whom she was looking, and waved her parasol. Trevor, lifting his hat, approached; the lady had withdrawn into the carriage, and he entered.

'Mum's the word!' said the lady.

'Why, it's—hang it all, it's Merton!'

'Your sister is staying with you?' asked Merton eagerly.

'Yes; but what on earth——'

'I'll tell you in the brougham. But you take a weight off my bosom! I am going to stay with you for a day or two; and now my reputation (or Mrs. Lumley's) is safe. Your servants never saw Mrs. Lumley?'

'Never,' said Trevor.

'All right! My portmanteau has her initials, S. M. L., and a crimson ticket; send a porter for it. Now take me to the brougham.'

Trevor offered his arm and carried the dressing-bag; the lady was led to his carriage. The portmanteau was recovered, and they drove away.

'Give me a cigarette,' said Merton, 'and I'll tell you all about it.'

He told Trevor all about it—except about the emu's feathers.

'But a male disguise would have done as well,' said Trevor.

'Not a bit. It would not have suited what I have to do in town. I cannot tell you why. The affair is complex. I have to settle it, if I can, so that neither Logan nor anyone else—except the body-snatcher and polite letter-writer—shall ever know how I managed it.'

Trevor had to be content with this reply. He took Merton, when they arrived, into the smoking-room, rang for tea, and 'squared his sister,' as he said, in the drawing-room. The pair were dining out, and, after a solitary dinner, Merton (in a tea-gown) occupied himself with literary composition. He put his work in a large envelope, sealed it, marked it with a St. Andrew's cross, and, when Trevor returned, asked him to put it in his safe.

'Two days after to-morrow, if I do not appear, you must open the envelope and read the contents,' he said.

After luncheon on the following day—a wet day—Miss Trevor and Merton (who was still arrayed as Mrs. Lumley) went out shopping. Miss Trevor then drove off to pay a visit (Merton could not let her know his next move), and he himself, his veil down, took a four-wheeled cab, and drove to Madame Claudine's. He made one or two purchases, and then asked for the head of the establishment, an Irish lady. To her he confided that he had to break a piece of distressing family news to Miss Markham, of the cloak department; that young lady was summoned; Madame Claudine, with a face of sympathy, ushered them into her private room, and went off to see a customer. Miss Markham was pale and trembling; Merton himself felt agitated.

'Is it about my father, or——' the girl asked.

'Pray be calm,' said Merton. 'Sit down. Both are well.'

The girl started. 'Your voice——' she said.

'Exactly,' said Merton; 'you know me.' And taking off his glove, he showed a curious mediæval ring, familiar to his friends. 'I could get at you in no other way than this,' he said, 'and it was absolutely necessary to see you.'

'What is it? I know it is about my father,' said the girl.

'He has done us a great service,' said Merton soothingly. He had guessed what the 'distressing circumstances' were in which the marquis had been restored to life. Perhaps the reader guesses? A discreet person, who has secretly to take charge of a corpse of pecuniary value, adopts certain measures (discovered by the genius of ancient Egypt) for its preservation. These measures, doubtless, had revived the marquis, who thus owed his life to his kidnapper.

'He has, I think, done us a great service,' Merton repeated; and the girl's colour returned to her beautiful face, that had been of marble.

'Yet there are untoward circumstances,' Merton admitted. 'I wish to ask you two or three questions. I must give you my word of honour that I have no intention of injuring your father. The reverse; I am really acting in his interests. Now, first, he has practised in Australia. May I ask if he was interested in the Aborigines?'

'Yes, very much,' said the girl, entirely puzzled. 'But,' she added, 'he was never in the Labour trade.'

'Blackbird catching?' said Merton. 'No. But he had, perhaps, a collection of native arms and implements?'

'Yes; a very fine one.'

'Among them were, perhaps, some curious native shoes, made of emu's feathers—they are called *Interlinia* or, by white men, *Kurdaitcha* shoes?'

'I don't remember the name,' said Miss Markham, 'but he had quite a number of them. The natives wear them to conceal their tracks when they go on a revenge party.'

Merton's guess was now a certainty. The marquis had spoken of Miss Markham's father as a 'landlouping' Australian doctor. The footmarks of the feathered shoes in the snow at Kirkburn proved that an article which only an Australian (or an anthropologist) was likely to know of had been used by the body-snatchers.

Merton reflected. Should he ask the girl whether she had told her father what, on the night of the marquis's appearance at the office, Logan had told her? He decided that this was superfluous; of course she had told her father, and the doctor had taken his measures (and the body of the marquis) accordingly. To ask a question would only be to enlighten the girl.

'That is very interesting,' said Merton. 'Now, I won't pretend that I disguised myself in this way merely to ask you about Australian curiosities. The truth is that, in your father's interests, I must have an interview with him.'

'You don't mean to do him any harm?' asked the girl anxiously.

'I have given you my word of honour. As things stand, I do not conceal from you that I am the only person who can save him from a situation which might be disagreeable, and that is what I want to do.'

'He will be quite safe if he sees you?' asked the girl, wringing her hands.

'That is the only way in which he can be safe, I am afraid.'

'You would not use a girl against her own father?'

'I would sooner die where I sit,' said Merton earnestly. 'Surely you can trust a friend of Mr. Logan's—who, by the bye, is very well?'

'Oh, oh,' cried the girl, 'I read that story of the stolen corpse in the papers. I understand!'

'It was almost inevitable that you should understand,' said Merton.

'But then,' said the girl, 'what did you mean by saying that my father has done you a great service. You are deceiving me. I have said too much. This is base!' Miss Markham rose, her eyes and cheeks burning.

'What I told you is the absolute and entire truth,' said Merton, nearly as red as she was.

'Then,' exclaimed Miss Markham, 'this is baser yet! You must mean that by doing what you think he has done my father has somehow enabled Robert—Mr. Logan—to come into the marquis's property. Perhaps the marquis left no will, or the will—is gone! And do you believe that Mr. Logan will thank you for acting in this way?' She stood erect, her hand resting on the back of a chair, indignant and defiant.

'In the first place, I have a written power from Mr. Logan to act as I think best. Next, I have not even informed myself as to how the law of Scotland stands in regard to the estate of a man who dies leaving no will. Lastly, Miss Markham, I am extremely hampered by the fact that Mr. Logan has not the remotest suspicion of what I suspected—and now know—to be the truth as to the disappearance of his cousin's body. I successfully concealed my idea from Mr. Logan, so as to avoid giving pain to him and you. I did my best to conceal it from you, though I never expected to succeed. And now, if you wish to know how your father has conferred a benefit on Mr. Logan, I must tell you, though I would rather be silent. Mr. Logan is aware of the benefit, but will never, if you can trust yourself, suspect his benefactor.'

'I can never, never see him again,' the girl sobbed.

'Time is flying,' said Merton, who was familiar, in works of fiction, with the situation indicated by the girl. 'Can you trust me, or not?' he asked. 'My single object is secrecy and your father's safety. I owe that to my friend, to you, and even, as it happens, to your father. Can you enable me, dressed as I am, to have an interview with him?'

'You will not hurt him? You will not give him up? You will not bring the police on him?'

'I am acting as I do precisely for the purpose of keeping the police off him. They have discovered nothing.'

The girl gave a sigh of relief.

'Your father's only danger would lie in my—failure to return from my interview with him. Against *that* I cannot safeguard him; it is fair to tell you so. But my success in persuading him to adopt a certain course would be equally satisfactory to Mr. Logan and to himself.'

'Mr. Logan knows nothing?'

'Absolutely nothing. I alone, and now you, know anything.'

The girl walked up and down in an agony.

'Nobody will ever know if I do not tell you how to find him,' she said.

'Unhappily that is not the case. I only ask *you*, so that it may not be necessary to take other steps, tardy, but certain, and highly undesirable.'

'You will not go to him armed?'

'I give you my word of honour,' said Merton. 'I have risked myself unarmed already.'

The girl paused with fixed eyes that saw nothing. Merton watched her. Then she took her resolve.

'I do not know where he is living. I know that on Wednesdays, that is, the day after to-morrow, he is to be found at Dr. Fogarty's, a private asylum, a house with a garden, in Water Lane, Hammersmith.'

It was the lane in which stood the Home for Destitute and Decayed Cats, whither Logan had once abducted Rangoon, the Siamese puss.

'Thank you,' said Merton simply. 'And I am to ask for —?'

'Ask first for Dr. Fogarty. You will tell him that you wish to see the *Ertwa Oknurcha*.'

'Ah, Australian for "The Big Man,"' said Merton.

'I don't know what it means,' said Miss Markham. 'Dr. Fogarty will then ask, "Have you the *churinga*?"'

The girl drew out a slim gold chain which hung round her neck and under her dress. At the end of it was a dark piece of wood, shaped much like a large cigar, and decorated with incised concentric circles, stained red.

'Take that and show it to Dr. Fogarty,' said Miss Markham, detaching the object from the chain.

Merton returned it to her. 'I know where to get a similar *churinga*,' he said. 'Keep your own. Its absence, if asked for, might lead to awkward questions.'

'Thank you; I can trust you,' said Miss Markham, adding, 'You will address my father as Dr. Melville.'

'Again thanks, and good-bye,' said Merton. He bowed and withdrew.

'She is a good deal upset, poor girl,' Merton remarked to Madame Claudine, who, on going to comfort Miss Markham with tea, found her weeping. Merton took another cab, and drove to Trevor's house.

After dinner (at which there were no guests), and in the smoking-room, Trevor asked whether he had made any progress.

'Everything succeeded to a wish,' said Merton. 'You remember Water Lane?'

'Where Logan carried the Siamese cat in my cab,' said Trevor, grinning at the reminiscence. 'Rather! I reconnoitred the place with Logan.'

'Well, on the day after to-morrow I have business there.'

'Not at the Cats' Home?'

'No, but perhaps you might reconnoitre again. Do you remember a house with high walls and spikes on them?'

'I do,' said Trevor; 'but how do you know? You never were there. You disapproved of Logan's method in the case of the cat.'

'I never was there; I only made a guess, because the house I am interested in is a private asylum.'

'Well, you guessed right. What then?'

'You might reconnoitre the ground to-morrow—the exits: there are sure to be some towards waste land or market gardens.'

'Jolly!' said Trevor; 'I'll make up as a wanderer from Suffolk, looking for a friend in the slums; semi-bargee kind of costume.'

'That would do,' said Merton. 'But you had better go in the early morning.'

'A nuisance. Why?'

'Because, later, you will have to get a gang of fellows to be about the house the day after, when I pay my visit.'

'Fellows of our own sort, or the police?'

'Neither. I thought of fellows of our own sort. They would talk and guess.'

'Better get some of Ned Mahony's gang?' asked Trevor.

Mr. Mahony was an ex-pugilist, and a distinguished instructor in the art of self-defence. He also was captain of a gang of 'chuckers out.'

'Yes,' said Merton, 'that is my idea. *They* will guess, too;

but when they know the place is a private lunatic asylum their hypothesis is obvious.'

'They'll think that a patient is to be rescued?'

'That will be their idea. And the old trick is a good trick. Cart of coals blocked in the gateway, or with another cart—the bigger the better—in the lane. The men will dress accordingly. Others will have stolen to the back and sides of the house; you will, in short, stop the earths after I enter. Your brougham, after setting me down, will wait in Hammersmith Road, or whatever the road outside is.'

'I may come?' asked Trevor.

'In command, as a coal carter.'

'Hooray!' said Trevor, 'and I'll tell you what, I won't reconnoitre as a bargee, but as a servant out of livery sent to look for a cat at the Home. And I'll mistake the asylum for the Home for Cats, and try to scout a little inside the gates.'

'Capital,' said Merton. 'Then, later, I want you to go to a curiosity shop near the Museum' (he mentioned the street), 'and look into the window. You'll see a little brown piece of wood like *this*.' Merton sketched rapidly the piece of wood which Miss Markham wore under her dress. 'The man has several. Buy one about the size of a big cigar for me, and buy one or two other trifles first.'

'The man knows me,' said Trevor, 'I have bought things from him.'

'Very good, but don't buy it when any other customer is in the shop. And, by the way, take Mrs. Lumley's portmanteau—the lock needs mending—to Jones's in Sloane Street to be repaired. One thing more: I should like to add a few lines to that manuscript I gave you to keep in your safe.'

Trevor brought the sealed envelope. Merton added a paragraph and resealed it. Trevor locked it up again.

On the following day Trevor started early, did his scouting in Water Lane, and settled with Mr. Mahony about his gang of muscular young prize-fighters. He also bought the native Australian curiosity, and sent Mrs. Lumley's portmanteau to have the lock repaired.

Merton determined to call at Dr. Fogarty's asylum at four in the afternoon. The gang, under Trevor, was to arrive half an hour later, and to surround and enter the premises if Merton did not emerge within a quarter of an hour.

At four o'clock exactly Trevor's brougham was at the gates of the asylum. The footman rang the bell, a porter opened a wicket, and admitted a lady of fashionable aspect, who asked for Dr. Fogarty. She was ushered into his study, her card ('Louise, 13 — Street') was taken by the servant, and Dr. Fogarty appeared. He was a fair, undecided-looking man, with blue wandering eyes, and long, untidy, reddish whiskers. He bowed and looked uncomfortable, as well he might.'

'I have called to see the *Ertwa Oknurcha*, Dr. Fogarty,' said Merton.

'Oh Lord,' said Dr. Fogarty, and murmured, 'Another of his lady friends!' adding—

'I must ask, Miss, have you the *churinga*?'

Merton produced, out of his muff, the Australian specimen which Trevor had bought.

The doctor inspected it. 'I shall take it to the *Ertwa Oknurcha*,' he said, and shambled out. Presently he returned. 'He will see you, Miss.'

Merton found the redoubtable Dr. Markham, an elderly man, clean-shaven, prompt-looking, with very keen dark eyes, sitting at a writing-table, with a few instruments of his profession lying about. The table stood on an oblong space of uncarpeted and polished flooring of some extent. Dr. Fogarty withdrew, the other doctor motioned Merton to a chair on the opposite side of the table. This chair was also on the uncarpeted space, and Merton observed four small brass plates in the parquet. Arranging his draperies, and laying aside his muff, Merton sat down, slightly shifting the position of the chair.

'Perhaps, Dr. Melville,' he said, 'it will be more reassuring to you if I at once hold my hands up,' and he sat there and smiled, holding up his neatly gloved hands.

The doctor stared, and *his* hand stole towards an instrument like an unusually long stethoscope, which lay on his table.

Merton sat there 'hands up,' still smiling. 'Ah, the blow-tube?' he said. 'Very good and quiet! Do you use *urali*? Infinitely better, at close quarters, than the noisy old revolver.'

'I see I have to do with a cool hand, sir,' said the doctor.

'Ah,' said Merton. 'Then let us talk as between man and man.' He tilted his chair backwards, and crossed his legs. 'By the way, as I have no Aaron and Hur to help me to hold up my hands, may I drop them? The attitude, though reassuring, is fatiguing.'

'If you won't mind first allowing me to remove your muff,' said the doctor. It lay on the table in front of Merton.

'By all means; no gun in my muff,' said Merton. 'In fact, I think the whole pistol business is overdone, and second rate.'

'I presume that I have the honour to speak to Mr. Merton?' asked the doctor. 'You slipped through the cordon?'

'Yes, I was the intoxicated miner,' said Merton. 'No doubt you have received a report from your agents?'

'Stupid fellows,' said the doctor.

'You are not flattering to me; but let us come to business. How much?'

'I need hardly ask,' said the doctor, 'it would be an insult to your intelligence, whether you have taken the usual precautions?'

Merton, whose chair was tilted, threw himself violently backwards, upsetting his chair, and then scrambled nimbly to his feet. Between him and the table yawned a square black hole of unknown depth.

'Hardly fair, Dr. Melville,' said he, picking up the chair and placing it on the carpet; 'besides, I *have* taken the ordinary precautions. The house is surrounded—Ned Mahony's lambs—the usual statement is in the safe of a friend. We must really come to the point. Time is flying,' and he looked at his watch. 'I can give you twenty minutes.'

'Have you anything in the way of terms to propose,' asked the doctor, filling his pipe.

'Well, first, absolute secrecy. I alone know the state of the case.'

'Has Mr. Logan no guess?'

'Not the faintest suspicion. The detectives, when I left Kirkburn, had not even found the trap door, you understand. You hit on its discovery through knowing the priest's hole at Oxburgh Hall, I suppose?'

The doctor nodded.

'You can guarantee absolute secrecy?' he asked.

'Naturally; the knowledge is confined to me, you, and your partners. I want the secrecy in Mr. Logan's interests, and you know why.'

'Well,' said the doctor. 'That is point one. So far I am with you.'

'Then, to enter on odious details,' said Merton. 'Had you thought of any terms?'

'The old man was stiff,' said the doctor, 'and your side only offered to double him in your advertisement, you know.'

'That was merely a way of speaking,' said Merton. 'What did the marquis propose?'

'Well, as his offer is not a basis of negotiation——?'

'Certainly not,' said Merton.

'Five hundred he offered, out of which we were to pay his fare back to Scotland.'

Both men laughed.

'But you have your own ideas?' said Merton.

'I had thought of 15,000*l.* and leaving England. He is a multimillionaire, the marquis.'

'It is rather a pull,' said Merton. 'Now speaking as a professional man, and on honour, how *is* his lordship?' Merton asked.

'Speaking as a professional man, he *may* live a year; he cannot live eighteen months—I stake my reputation on that.'

Merton mused.

'I'll tell you what we can do,' he said. 'We can guarantee the interest, at a fancy rate, say five per cent., during the marquis's life, which you reckon as good for a year and a half, at most. The lump sum we can pay on his decease.'

The doctor mused in his turn.

'I don't like it. He may alter his will, and then—where do I come in?'

'Of course that is an objection,' said Merton. 'But where do you come in if you refuse? Logan, I can assure you (I have read up the Scots law since I came to town) is the heir if the marquis dies intestate. Suppose that I do not leave this house in a few minutes, Logan won't bargain with you; we settled *that*; and really you will have taken a great deal of trouble to your own considerable risk. You see the usual document, my statement, is lodged with a friend.'

'There is certainly a good deal in what you say,' remarked the doctor.

'Then, to take a more cheerful view,' said Merton, 'I have medical authority for stating that any will made now, or later, by the marquis, would probably be upset, on the ground of mental unsoundness, you know. So Logan would succeed, in spite of a later will.'

The doctor smiled. 'That point I grant you. Well, one must chance something. I accept your proposals. You will give me a written agreement, signed by Mr. Logan, for the arrangement.'

'Yes, I have power to act.'

'Then, Mr. Merton, why in the world did you not let your friend walk in Burlington Arcade, and meet the lady? He would have been met with the same terms, and could have proposed the same modifications.'

'Well, Dr. Melville, first, I was afraid that he might accidentally discover the real state of the case, as I surmised that it existed—that might have led to family inconveniences, you know.'

'Yes,' the doctor admitted. 'I have felt that. My poor daughter—a good girl, sir! It wrung my heart-strings, I assure you.'

'I have the warmest sympathy with you,' said Merton, going on. 'Well, in the second place, I was not sure that I could trust Mr. Logan, who has rather a warm temper, to conduct the negotiations. Thirdly, I fear I must confess that I did what I have done—well, "for human pleasure."'

'Ah, you are young,' said the doctor, sighing.

'Now,' said Merton, 'shall I sign a promise? We can call Dr. Fogarty up to witness it. By the bye, what about "value received"? Shall we say that we purchase your ethnological collection?'

The doctor grinned, and assented, the deed was written, signed, and witnessed by Dr. Fogarty, who hastily retreated.

'Now about restoring the marquis,' said Merton. 'He's here, of course; it was easy enough to get him into an asylum. Might I suggest a gag, if by chance you have such a thing about you? To be removed, of course, when once I get him into the house of a friend. And the usual bandage over his eyes: he must never know where he has been.'

'You think of everything, Mr. Merton,' said the doctor. 'But, how are you to account for the marquis's reappearance alive?' he asked.

'Oh *that*—easily! My first theory, which I fortunately mentioned to his medical attendant, Dr. Douglas, in the train, before I reached Kirkburn, was that he had recovered from catalepsy, and had secretly absconded, for the purpose of watching Mr. Logan's conduct. We shall make him believe that this is the fact, and the old woman who watched him——'

'Plucky old woman,' said the doctor.

'Will swear to anything that he chooses to say.'

'Well, that is your affair,' said the doctor.

'Now,' said Merton, 'give me a receipt for 750*l.*; we shall tell the marquis that we had to spring 250*l.* on his original offer.'

The doctor wrote out, stamped, and signed the receipt. 'Perhaps I had better walk in front of you down stairs?' he asked Merton.

'Perhaps it really would be more hospitable,' Merton acquiesced.

Merton was ushered again into Dr. Fogarty's room on the ground floor. Presently the other doctor reappeared, leading a bent and much muffled-up figure, who preserved total silence—for excellent reasons. The doctor handed to Merton a sealed envelope, obviously the marquis's will. Merton looked closely into the face of the old marquis, whose eyes, dropping senile tears, showed no sign of recognition.

Dr. Fogarty next adjusted a silken bandage, over a wad of cotton wool, which he placed on the eyes of the prisoner.

Merton then took farewell of Dr. Melville (*alias* Markham); he and Dr. Fogarty supported the tottering steps of Lord Restalrig, and they led him to the gate.

'Tell the porter to call my brougham,' said Merton to Dr. Fogarty.

The brougham was called and came to the gate, evading a coal-cart which was about to enter the lane. Merton aided the marquis to enter, and said 'Home.' A few rough fellows, who were loitering in the lane, looked curiously on. In half an hour the marquis, his gag and the bandage round his eyes removed, was sitting in Trevor's smoking-room, attended to by Miss Trevor.

It is probably needless to describe the simple and obvious process (rather like that of the Man, the Goose, and the Fox) by which Mrs. Lumley, with her portmanteau, left Trevor's house that evening to pay another visit, while Merton himself arrived, in evening dress, to dinner at a quarter past eight. He had telegraphed to Logan: 'Entirely successful. Come up by the 11.30 to-night, and bring Mrs. Bower.'

The marquis did not appear at dinner. He was in bed, and, thanks to a sleeping potion, slumbered soundly. He awoke about nine in the morning to find Mrs. Bower by his bedside.

'Eh, marquis, finely we have jinked them,' said Mrs. Bower; and she went on to recount the ingenious measures by which the

marquis, recovering from his 'dwawm,' had secretly withdrawn himself.

'I mind nothing of it, Jeanie, my woman,' said the marquis. 'I thought I wakened with some deevil running a knife into me; he might have gone further, and I might have fared worse. He asked for money, but, faith, we niffered long and came to no bargain. And a woman brought me away. Who was the woman?'

'Oh, dreams,' said Mrs. Bower. 'Ye had another sair fit o' the dwawming, and we brought you here to see the London doctors. Hoo could ony mortal speerit ye away, let be it was the fairies, and me watching you a' the time! A fine gliff ye gie'd me when ye sat up and askit for sma' yill' (small beer).

'I mind nothing of it,' replied the marquis. However, Mrs. Bower stuck to her guns, and the marquis was, or appeared to be, resigned to accept her explanation. He dozed throughout the day, but next day he asked for Merton. Their interview was satisfactory; Merton begged leave to introduce Logan, and the marquis, quite broken down, received his kinsman with tears, and said nothing about his marriage.

'I'm a dying man,' he remarked finally, 'but I'll live long enough to chouse the taxes.'

His sole idea was to hand over (in the old Scottish fashion) the main part of his property to Logan, *inter vivos*, and then to live long enough to evade the death-duties. Merton and Logan knew well enough the unsoundness of any such proceedings, especially considering the mental debility of the old gentleman. However, the papers were made out. The marquis retired to one of his English seats, after which event his reappearance was made known to the world. In his English home Logan sedulously nursed him. A more generous diet than he had ever known before did wonders for the marquis, though he peevishly remonstrated against every bottle of wine that was uncorked. He did live for the span which he deemed necessary for his patriotic purpose, and peacefully expired, his last words being 'Nae grand funeral.'

Public curiosity, of course, was keenly excited about the mysterious reappearance of the marquis in life. But the interviewers could extract nothing from Mrs. Bower, and Logan declined to be interviewed. To paragraphists the mystery of the marquis was 'a two months' feast,' like the case of Elizabeth Canning, long ago.

Logan inherited under the marquis's original will, and, of course, the Exchequer benefited in the way which Lord Restalrig had tried to frustrate.

Miss Markham (whose father is now the distinguished head of the ethnological department in an American museum) did not persist in her determination never to see Logan again. The beautiful Lady Fast Castle never allows her photograph to appear in the illustrated weekly papers.

(To be continued.)

The Parliamentary Machine.

IN a very remarkable letter to the Abbé Sieyès, the Emperor Napoleon took occasion to express his idea of the proper sphere of activity of a legislative chamber. 'No one,' he said, 'can have greater respect for the independence of the legislative power than I; but legislation does not mean finance, criticism of the administration, or ninety-nine out of the hundred things with which in England the Parliament occupies itself. The legislature should legislate—*i.e.* construct grand laws on scientific principles of jurisprudence, but it must respect the independence of the Executive as it desires its own independence to be respected.' This very suggestive passage cannot be too constantly borne in mind by those who are concerned in criticising English Parliamentary institutions. For no such criticism can possibly be effective without a due perception of the fact that before you judge a machine you must have a clear perception of the work it is expected to perform. Yet the warning is now especially needed. Never before perhaps have British institutions been subjected to so much depreciatory examination as they recently have been. Almost everything in its turn is, we are told by somebody or other, characterised by a conspicuous absence of efficiency; and it was, therefore, not to be expected that Parliament would escape at least some condemnation. It has, in fact, been censured not a little for its unbusinesslike methods, and its legislative sterility is becoming almost a commonplace of politics. It will, therefore, be not without interest to inquire how far these complaints are justified, to what causes this alleged Parliamentary impotence is due, and whether a remedy can be found.

That the dissatisfaction with the present state of things in Parliament has some ground for its existence can hardly be denied. It is apparent, in the first place, that the output of legislation has in recent sessions certainly been small. It is possible, of course, that some—Mr. Herbert Spencer, for example,

who terms the divine right of Parliaments the great political superstition, and believes that people are suffering not from too little but from too much legislation—will regard the fact with tranquil equanimity. But that is not the general view. The complaint, too, is not confined to the quantity of legislation; it extends to quality and form as well as to substance and amount. It is, indeed, only too true that statutes are sometimes passed in a shape that leaves much to be desired. It is notorious, for instance, that the Workmen's Compensation Act, which was intended to abolish litigation in this class of cases altogether, has given rise to more litigation than any Act of recent years. The exigencies of Parliamentary business are such that Bills are drafted in a manner specially designed to avoid criticism or to ward off opposition. Legislation, in short, takes the line of least resistance; but that is a way that does not make for lucidity, and is certainly abhorrent to the nice sense of the Parliamentary draftsman. The Statute Book, in spite of revision, still bristles with curiosities. It is not, for instance, generally known that about one hundred Acts, the Ballot Act among them, have to be annually re-enacted. There is even material for the humorist. There is one Act that, after declaring the penalty for an offence to be fourteen years' transportation, goes on to provide that the penalty is to be divided between the informer and the poor of the parish. There are, moreover, Acts still in force which make persons convicted of perjury liable to be nailed by both ears to the pillory, send Sunday traders to the stocks, and treat Calais as a British possession. It is, then, undeniably the fact that Parliament—and in speaking of Parliament it is intended to speak particularly of the House of Commons—does not accomplish all that the people, rightly or wrongly, expect it to perform. But that is no reason why it should be indiscriminately censured, or dismissed with disdain after the manner of Carlyle. They would exhibit but superficial knowledge and slender judgment who would condemn the House off-hand without a due consideration of its past history and present circumstances. Both the historical sense and some amount of retrospective imagination are requisite if the criticism is to be of any value.

Anyone who takes the trouble to look into such records as we have of the proceedings of the House of Commons in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries will not be long in seeing that the House formerly occupied itself with a very different class of questions from those which to-day engage its attention. To read

these old reports is like looking into a strange and long-forgotten world. Of legislation in the proper sense of the term, such as is now expected from Parliament, there was very little. The greater part of the time and energies of the House was taken up in the discussion of questions which now, for the most part, have been happily set at rest. Its history is in the main a history of constitutional and theological polemics. There was, in the first place, the grand dispute over the respective rights of Parliament and the Crown. Very curious is it to read how James I. gravely informed the members of the House of Commons that it was their duty only 'to give advice in such things as shall by the King be proposed,' that they must not 'meddle with the main points of government,' that 'the absolute prerogative of the Crown is no subject for the tongue of a lawyer, nor is lawful to be disputed,' and that it is 'presumption and high contempt in a subject to dispute what a king can do or say that a king cannot do this.' Scarcely less strange to modern ears is the speech of Charles I. when he bid the House remember that 'Parliaments were altogether in his power for their calling, sitting, and dissolution, and therefore, as he found the fruits of them good or evil, they were to continue to be or not to be.' By the time of the Restoration the struggle was so far decided that Charles II. was forced in spite of himself to assure his Parliaments that he loved them—an assurance that was probably more likely to amuse than to deceive. It may be said, indeed, that almost the entire energies of the House were for a long time absorbed in this contention, which in one shape or another, either directly or indirectly, was continually before it; and it was not until the accession of the Hanoverian dynasty that the controversy reached anything like a final settlement. Such power of activity as remained to the House was devoted to disputes more or less violent with the Peers over their respective privileges and several spheres of jurisdiction; to the impeachments of Ministers, who, in times when they did not hold themselves responsible to Parliament, could only in this way be got rid of; to debates on alleged breaches and abuses of privilege; to displays of theological pugilism; to the consideration of the need of a standing army; to the unravelling of plots, oftener more imaginary than real; to the settlement of disputed elections; and to other topics that now would be thought to be quite outside Parliamentary notice. There was hardly anything formerly that the House of Commons did not think its duty to discuss. Sometimes there was a book or pamphlet, such as Bishop Burnet's 'Pastoral

Letter,' which in its displeasure it committed to the common hangman to be burned; or there was a sermon which brought some unhappy clergyman beneath its lash. In a word, there was nothing which it did not touch, even if did not adorn. There were, indeed, some statutes, such as the Habeas Corpus Act and the Statute of Frauds, which stand out as landmarks for all time; but they were few, and beyond some curious attempts to stimulate trade by such expedients as prohibiting exports or imports and regulating manufactures, Parliament passed few laws—a function, indeed, that was not much demanded of it. The one great point of resemblance between the Parliaments of then and now is the debates upon Supply, for the House of Commons has always zealously maintained its right to be the guardian of the national purse; and it is only in the amount of the Estimates and in the different methods of taxation that in this part of its functions there is any notable change to be observed. But apart from questions of finance, the House has as much altered inwardly in its spirit and in the character of its labours as it has in its external surroundings and in the material form of the chamber where it sits.

It would appear, then, at first sight that the House of Commons, being now happily rid of a great variety of questions which formerly occupied its time, should be better able to busy itself with useful legislation than it was before. And this is in a measure true. But, on the other hand, the amount of work that it is expected to perform has increased to an extent that far more than outweighs the advantages derived from being freed from debates that were often embittered and not very fruitful. This is a result that is due to several causes. In the first place, with the growth of democratic government, and especially since the Reform Act of 1832, what may be called the domain of administrative law—the law, that is to say, which is necessary to keep in proper working order the various executive bodies, both imperial and local—has immensely increased. Next, contemporaneously with this process the idea has become generally diffused, whether rightly or wrongly, that much amelioration and reform is to be derived from legislation. The House of Commons, so it is argued, is the agent of the people, and they have only to direct their agent what to do and all will be well. Democracy, in a word, has become conscious of its powers, and impatient to exert them. Lastly, besides these general causes, which operate more or less in all countries where popular government exists, there is another

which is peculiar to England, and that is the system of Cabinet government. It is the specific quality of this system that the executive and legislative organs are fused; that while on the one hand the Legislature insists upon controlling the Executive, the Executive keeps a firm grasp upon legislation. The merits and demerits of this arrangement it would be irrelevant to discuss; it is enough to note the fact, and the consequences that follow from it. The clear result is that the labours of both organs are very much increased; for while the Executive not merely governs but initiates legislation, the Legislature not merely makes laws but inquires into the way in which the laws, when made, are put into execution. The peculiar character of the system can perhaps best be realised by recalling the passage from Napoleon's letter that has been already quoted. The Napoleonic conception is the exact opposite of the actually existing English practice, and this is a fact which is of great importance to remember when the House of Commons is censured for its failures. It is, perhaps, not too much to say that of all the popular chambers in the world it has the most to do. To supervise the government not only of the British Islands, but in the last resort of the whole British Empire, and to keep the wheels of this vast and intricate machinery working smoothly, is a Herculean task that leaves but little room for legislation not of an administrative kind.

So much at least by way of extenuation will be allowed. But, it will be asked, what has the House of Commons done to fit itself for its changed conditions, and to make itself better equipped for these new and exacting functions? This is a question to which it is difficult to give an answer quite satisfactory to a critic. True it is that the House has shown itself conscious of its defects, and it is certainly fond of tinkering with its rules of procedure. It has been calculated that between the years 1832 and 1881 it appointed no fewer than twenty-one Committees to consider revision of its rules; and motions are constantly being made for departing from such rules as it possesses. In the Session of 1901 motions of this kind were made on eighteen days. This very Session it has been much occupied with the discussion of new rules. Nevertheless, it may be said by some that the House is cramped and stifled by old practice and traditions that served well enough for a past age, but are entirely unsuited to the present. But as the records of the past are unrolled it will be seen that the changes in the habits of the House, its character and ideas, are so great that it becomes

impossible to allow that there is much force in this contention. In some ways, indeed, the House formerly worked under rules that must have been very salutary and helpful for the due performance of public business. The Members appear to have taken themselves and their duties rather seriously. For the reason, perhaps, that in theory (though the practice had become obsolete) they were entitled to receive wages from their constituents, they, both individually and collectively, were very assiduous in attending to their Parliamentary duties—probably even more so than they are to-day. The rules of course varied from time to time, but orders were frequently in force that prohibited absence without leave, provided for a roll-call, and imposed fines for non-attendance. These rules were sometimes rigidly enforced. In the year 1668 an order was passed that absent Members should be sent for by the Serjeant-at-Arms, be fined 40*l.*, and be committed to the Tower until the fine was paid. A plea of sickness was allowed, but leave of absence was required even for purposes of business. When, for instance, Sir John Maynard, the celebrated lawyer, ventured to go on the Western Circuit without having first obtained permission, his conduct was brought before the notice of the House, and his son was allowed to write to him to order him to return on pain of being sent for by the Serjeant-at-Arms. If leave was granted, the Member having it was expected to use it. On one occasion Sir Richard Temple was allowed to visit his sick wife; but, rising to speak when he was supposed to be away, an objection was raised to his being heard. Sir Richard, perhaps because his wife was better, good-humouredly parried it by calling it a ‘merry motion, a Christmas motion,’ and the subject was quietly dropped.

Then the hours of business were arranged in a manner that must have made for good and expeditious work. The House met early, sometimes as early as seven o’clock, and usually at eight or nine o’clock in the morning, and rose not infrequently at mid-day or not long afterwards; a practice that must have had a salutary effect upon the habits of its members. We read that on one occasion the Speaker rebuked Sir Thomas Meeres for having sat up so late the previous night that he was unable to present a report to the House in proper time the next morning. Gradually, however, the hours became later, and early in the eighteenth century Bishop Burnet remarked that the House, which then met at noon, began its work too late; and it was not long before the hour of meeting was postponed until two o’clock

in the afternoon. Evening sittings, or at least sittings till a late hour at night, were comparatively rare; and it only occasionally happened that a motion was made that candles be brought in, so that the debate could be continued. The motion for candles was sometimes angrily debated, because to negative it was equivalent to the application of the closure. Even Mr. Gladstone could remember the time when the House used to rise from business at six or seven o'clock in the evening. Speaking in 1882 he said, 'I can well remember, in my boyhood, when sitting in the gallery of the House which was burnt down, that the same thing used to take place as now takes place in the other House of Parliament—namely, that between six and seven o'clock the House, as a matter of course, had disposed of its business, and was permitted to adjourn.' But if the hours were shorter, the Saturday holiday was not thought of; and it is said to have owed its origin to Sir Robert Walpole, who wished to devote the day to hunting. So deeply do the amusements of a nation influence the conduct of even the gravest of affairs.

The House of Commons, therefore, it is evident, is not suffering from strangulation by antiquated practice. Most of its ancient rules have been abolished or have dropped into oblivion. The character of its business, too, as, indeed, it has been already noted, has been utterly transformed. It is curious to read in the reports the kind of things that it debated; how, for instance, it ordered the arrest of four barristers for arguing a case before the House of Lords; how it resolved that a Bristol clergyman who preached High-Church doctrines was 'a scandal and reproach to his function'; how it expelled one member for daring to assert that a Popish plot did not exist; and how it gravely inquired into the charge brought against Samuel Pepys of being a Papist. Debates upon whether offenders of its dignity should receive sentence standing or kneeling at the bar; whether the Lord Mayor, who had been summoned before it, should be provided with a chair, and the like questions, can hardly be said to have been of the importance they must have assumed at the time. Though it cannot be said of the House, as it was of Horace Walpole, that serious business was a trifle to it, yet it must be allowed that sometimes trifles were its serious business.

That the Parliaments of modern times have not degenerated may be reasonably inferred from the fact that at all times there have been persons to be found who had complaints to make of the House of Commons. Samuel Pepys, for instance, said that it was

'a beast not to be understood'; that it was swayed with faction and self-interest; that he never knew what it was to be a knave until he entered it. He lamented that the payment of wages to Members had been discontinued, because the electors formerly 'chose men that understood their business and would attend to it, and then could expect an account, but now they cannot.' Sometimes the dissatisfaction of the country was asserted in a very positive fashion. A notable occasion happened in the year 1701, when the Grand Jury of the Maidstone Quarter Sessions went so far as to present a petition to the House asking it to compose its factious disputes and to proceed to devote itself to the serious business of the nation. The offended House was in a flame; it stigmatised the petition as scandalous and revolutionary, as a reflection upon the representatives of the people, and committed the five chief petitioners to prison. It is significant that they became the most popular persons in the kingdom. To come to a later period, Sir Robert Peel, who was a great Parliamentary manager, once confessed that when he looked at the state of public business he was in complete despair.

Nor must it be too readily assumed that in comparatively recent years the House has not vigorously attempted to amend the rules of its procedure. The immense time, for instance, that was once occupied upon receiving petitions is now entirely saved; whole departments of Private Bill legislation have been abolished, either wholly or nearly so, by Acts relating to Divorce, Patents, and Naturalisation, and the Scotch Private Bill Procedure Act; abusive motions for the adjournment of the House have received a wholesome check; obstruction has to a great extent been beaten down by the application of the closure; the system of devolution to Committees has been extended and improved. One change, indeed, has occurred, which cannot be enthusiastically approved, but it is a change that has been brought about automatically rather than of deliberate purpose. The private Member—and it is his altered position that is referred to—will resent, and not unjustly, the saying that he has become of less consequence but more consequential. His grievances have steadily increased; for whereas formerly it was the private member who used to initiate legislation, it is now the Cabinet. Even as long ago as 1882 Mr. Gladstone remarked upon the change, saying that in his opinion 'one of the very serious evils of the present condition of business in this House is the enormous restriction and limitation of the opportunities afforded to our junior members.' Since then those

grievances have become even more acute. 'This is called the House of Commons,' said Mr. T. Gibson Bowles in 1900, 'but it really is in a fair way to become a den of placemen, on account of the successive steps whereby all power is taken out of the hands of private members, and put into the hands of the Government.' There is only too much truth in this strongly worded protest, but the evil is one that the pressure and complexity of public business has made almost inevitable. The private member, in short, is almost helpless in a House where even Cabinet Ministers with a party majority behind them sometimes fail.

From the facts which have been noted two conclusions may be drawn. One is that the House of Commons, which is the vital organ of an Atlas that bears no small part of the globe upon its shoulders, has immense labours to perform; the other is that not merely its habits, its spirit and traditions, but its practice and procedure have been changed much more than a superficial observer would be disposed to allow. It would follow that many of the strictures passed upon it are beside the mark. In a word, the Parliamentary machine is expected to do work which, in all the circumstances of the case, it is impossible that it should perform. To demand of it that it should supervise the administration of the British Empire, and, at the same time, be a Legislature in the Napoleonic sense, is utterly unreasonable.

But though the House of Commons is probably quite as good as a chamber as ever it was, there is no reason why it should not improve some parts of its procedure. Greater care might be taken in the arrangement of business; the 'digestive faculty' of the House—to use the quaint phrase of a seventeenth-century speaker—might be better considered. There seems to be no reason why the system of devolution to committees should not be carried further, for, as Mr. Gladstone said, 'the real solution of the difficulties of the House is to be found in the principle of the division of labour, the multiplication of the organs by which the House applies itself to and discharges its proper work.' Again, unfinished business might well be carried over from one Session to another. It is done in America, and what is practicable there should surely be so here. Then motions for the adjournment of the House might be even more restricted than they are. Nor would it be any great hardship upon the great majority of the Members if some limit were placed upon the length of speeches. There is still too much of 'the dreary drip of dilatory declamation'; there are still some Members of whom it may be said, as

Carlyle said of Macaulay, that they have 'gone all to tongue.' In America it is the rule that 'no member shall occupy more than one hour in debate on any question in the House or in Committee,' and not more than five minutes when the House is in Committee on Appropriation Bills. If a speaker wishes to extend his remarks, he may by unanimous consent obtain leave to have his speech printed in the appendix to the Congressional Records. There is surely something here at least worth consideration. The method of taking divisions, moreover, might be improved; for anyone who is acquainted with the modes of taking divisions in foreign legislative assemblies cannot avoid the conclusion that in the English House of Commons a great deal of time is wasted in exercising in the lobbies. Lastly, with regard to the defects in the form and wording of Bills, something might be done to reduce them to a minimum. Not that the difficulty of the work should be underrated, for it makes the greatest possible demands upon the intellect. 'I will venture to affirm,' said John Austin the jurist, 'that what is commonly called the *technical* part of legislation is incomparably more difficult than what may be called the *ethical*. In other words, it is far easier to conceive justly what would be useful law than so to construct that same law that it may accomplish the design of the law-giver.' But if Members would only reflect that it is their business to deal with great principles, and that details might be left to the discretion of the Administration, the difficulty would be lessened. A committee of experts for the revision of drafts might also be created.

But no rules whatsoever can be of much avail unless the Members of the House are moved by what has been well called the 'Parliamentary spirit,' and unless they are good 'Parliament-men,' as the old phrase ran. The character of those for whose guidance rules are made is of even more importance than the rules themselves. Freedom of speech, wide as the heavens and unfettered as the air, is the very life-breath of the House, but it has to be restricted lest its abuse by a small minority should obstruct the business of the nation. It is a sad reflection that, as Mr. Gladstone once said, the House 'becomes year after year more and more the slave of some of the poorest and most insignificant among its members.' But that state of things is not so much the fault of the House as of the people who create it. In their hands the remedy in the last resort lies.

C. B. ROYLANCE KENT.

My Old Album.

(Paraphrased from the French of Jacques Normand.)

WITH big gilt clasp, crimped back and board.
 Ugly? No, that is not the word—
 But something more—
 This ancient album, who can doubt?
 In early 'sixties' first came out,
 Or just before—

'Twas purchased from—but which of you
 Young folk that 'know a thing or two'—
 Have heard or care,
 About yon firm that erst supplied
 Such articles at Christmastide
 To old Mayfair?

Where was I then? At school? Or had
 I blossomed to an undergrad.?
 This much I know,
 Photo-collecting was the rage,
 And such a present at my age
 Was *comme il faut*.

I reckoned it exceeding fine,
 With cipher to proclaim it mine
 In gold enchased;
 And in the frames for them devised
 My stock of portraits undersized,
 How fondly placed!

MY OLD ALBUM.

First come the great and famous men
 Whose 'cartes' from every dealer then
 Were wholesale got;
 How one and all they stare and scowl,
 To find themselves stuck cheek by jowl
 With such a lot!

Prince Albert, Garibaldi, 'Pam'—
 Jeff Davis, 'Uncle Abraham'—
 Lord Clyde and Brougham.
 Whoe'er they were that won renown,
 At home, abroad, in shire or town
 For all was room—

Letters and Science, Art, the Stage,
 A record on the picture page
 Is served for each:
 'George Eliot,' Eastlake, P.R.A.,
 Novello, Kinglake, Thackeray,
 Sims Reeves, John Leech.

New men who made a lucky *coup*,
 'Lions' like Speke and Du Chaillu,
 A Derby 'jock';
 Merest acquaintance, dearest chum,
 Old folk at home—pell-mell they come
 The page to stock.

There postured by the artist's hand,
 With eyes set hard, they sit or stand,
 But not 'at ease'—
 To stone as by the gorgon's head
 Turned, when the fateful word was said,
 'Now steady, please!'

Their effigies I here behold
 Whose hands so oft in days of old
 In mine were pressed;
 Whose face—whose voice, I knew so well,
 Whose very secrets I could tell
 Within their breast.

My schoolmates, lo! How straight of limb,
Of waist how exquisitely slim,
How spick and span!
Cadet, lifeguardsman, diplomat,
The fag I called a cheeky brat
Turned midshipman.

Yon briefless member of the Bar
In wig and gown, prospects afar,
A great career;
His cause is always to be just,
In him shall virtue put its trust,
Him vice shall fear.

Bright maids behold, whose gravest care
Was their complexion or their hair,
Or crinoline;
Convinced that life would all be gay,
As they had found it in their May
Of blithe eighteen.

Those little chits with locks of gold,
Still by the governess controlled
For freedom yearn;
Nor guess how sweet will childhood seem
When it has vanished like a dream,
Without return—

Grey are and stout those striplings now,
Care's register upon their brow
The crow has writ:
The middy is a K.C.B.;
Around yon blue-eyed fairy's knee
Grandchildren flit.

They whom as 'old' we used to know
Have ended long—how long!—ago
Their earthly tale;
And, gone ahead a little way,
Have passed, as we shall pass one day,
Behind the veil.

MY OLD ALBUM.

Ah me ! The list extends amain
Of those whom ne'er on earth again
 'Tis mine to see ;
Page after page I pause to mark
Some eyes that are for ever dark
 Gaze out on me.

Though others deem thy faded bloom
Fit only for the lumber room,
 Old album : thine
Is still the power a spell to raise
That back transports me to the days
 Of Auld lang syne.

And as on thy discoloured face
The sweet sad memories I trace
 Of other years,
How often is it mine to view
The record faint and dimly through
 A mist of tears.

J. E. G

Cock Robin.

ROB NUTGAL learned more in the year after he quitted the sea than all the fifty years he had spent on and in it had taught him. Those fifty rough years about the face of the waters had taught him all a sailorman might learn. That included not a few things he found it difficult to unlearn, and it left on one side not a few things which most men learn with difficulty. It remained for a pale worn woman and a crooked small boy to teach him the other things.

He had been a good-enough husband as sailormen go, and as far as the wife at home knew. A fair share of his hard-earned wages had reached her tireless hands, and if the rest had been spent in ways she might not have approved of—well, sailing is a hard life, and what the woman at home does not know as actual fact she does not worry about if she be a wise woman, and Mrs. Nutgal had in her many elements of wisdom.

She was thrifty too, and while Rob was roaming abroad she turned her talents—and such share of his as he brought home to her from time to time—to good account in a small general shop in the upper part of the old main street of Shingleigh, the part where the old roadway used to run level with the doors of the houses, but has since been cut down a good six feet. This necessitates a flight of stone steps to each shop, with an iron handrail for the nervous; and, except just at meal times, every single step in front of every single shop is covered with children, through whom would-be customers must wade as through a heavy surf.

Mrs. Nutgal did not make much money by her shop, but she kept herself and her children above actual want till they were able to fend for themselves. And, after all, that is more than ampler provision sometimes leads to. As the youngsters grew up they drifted away on their own account, some to sea and some beneath it, and some to distant parts, whence came intermittent letters

sometimes asking help, and sometimes, but more rarely, tendering it for the sake of old times. When the letters ceased coming Mrs. Nutgal's lips pinched the tighter, and in her moments of leisure—say in bed at night, when she was too tired to sleep—her thoughts went out after the wanderers, and she wondered vaguely what evil had befallen them.

Her one consolation in Rob's last long absence was the boy Robin, child of her old age, and the only one remaining of a handful. Rob had been greatly taken with this late comer the last two times he had been at home. But he had not been gone to sea a week, the last time of all, when the poor little fellow had a terrible fall from a neighbour's arms, and the result, after a long illness, was—Cock Robin—Cock Robin with his humped back and shortened leg, and the perpetual quick tap-tap-tapping of his little crutch, and the sharp little face with the gleam in it, and the quick black eyes which regarded you with just exactly the shy trustfulness of his namesake of the snows.

The sight of him, so different from the straight, sturdy little chap he had been carrying about in his mind, would be a terrible shock to Rob when he came home, and he would likely lay the blame to her, and at first the mother looked forward to his coming with some dread. But, as the time lengthened and Rob did not come, she began to fear that the inevitable had happened, and that she would never set eyes on him again.

Then suddenly, after two years' absence, he walked into the little shop one day and announced that he was going to sea no more. He was sixty-five, and he had had sailing enough to last him the rest of his life. This last voyage had been a terror even to his experience—ship ill-found, accommodation not fit for dogs, officers drunken bullies, and he himself in purgatory for the last six months with rheumatism. His bones ached still when he thought of the night watches which seemed as if they would never end, and the day watches which still stood up before him like solid grey-green slabs of misery, when his joints were like rusted hinges and his eyes swam with the pain that never slept.

His joints were still rusty and his knuckles knobbly, but a long spell ashore would set him right. He would assist his wife in the shop and take things easy. He had lived this last two years as meagrely, both in point of quality and quantity, as would have made many a dog turn up its nose, if not its toes also. His keep would cost very little extra, and the snug warmth of the

dark little parlour behind the dark little shop came not far from his ideas of heaven.

It took him some time to shake down to 'longshore life. He felt odd and big and out of place in the shop, where he could hardly turn round without dislocating the stock. But he stuck close to it all through the winter, smoking intermittent pipes over the small fire in the parlour, and spinning interminable yarns to the eager Robin, who would sit by the hour in the glimmer, gazing at him with wide eyes and open mouth, and an appetite that never had too much.

They were as good friends as ever, these two, once the father had grown accustomed, though never reconciled, to the humped back and the short leg and the twinkling crutch. These things had weighed heavily on him just at first—so much so that, more than once, in the early days of their acquaintance, he had found it necessary to adjourn to 'The Mariners' Rest' round the corner for the purposes of recuperative consolation.

On one such occasion he found an old shipmate, just landed, with his pay burning his pockets, and they consoled one another, and relieved the shipmate's swelling to such an extent that Rob Nutgal returned home drunk.

He rolled through the little shop like a cyclone, leaving destruction in his wake, and dropped into his chair before the fire, and sat staring into it in a state of happy fuddlement. His wife's lips pinched momentarily as she straightened things up behind him and shut the door, but she said nothing. She knew sailormen's ways, and he was a good man on the whole.

Presently Robin came tapping quickly through the shop.

'Dad here, mother?' he asked cheerfully, and she had a customer at the moment and could only nod to him.

'Hullo!' said Robin as he dropped on to his stool. 'Where you been? I bin looking all round the town for you.'

'Ay, ay!'

'What you bin doing?' asked the sharp little voice as the sharp little eyes recognised something abnormal in his companion.

'Ay, ay!'

'You're drunk.'

'Ay, ay!'

'I'm not going to stop wi' a drunk man,' and Robin got up and steadied himself on his crutch, and the little peaked face gleamed red and angry.

'Ay, ay!' and Robin stumped away and did not return.

The old man quietly slept off the effects of his enjoyment, and when he woke up looked for his small companion. But Robin would have nothing to do with him for two whole days, and regarded him with suspicious reserve each time they met.

But shipmates with bulging pockets were not very common, and matters soon settled down again into their old groove.

Then a great misfortune fell on them. The hard-working mother sickened and took to her bed, and Rob and the boy were on their beam ends.

They did their best, but she was very tired. She had slaved for fifty years and rest was grateful to her, though so unusual that she could hardly lie still in her bed for thinking of the shop and everything going wrong in it.

They did their best, but they made better nurses than shop-keepers, and Mrs. Nutgal knew it and it did not tend to quietness of mind.

Since the business could not run itself, Rob prevailed on some neighbour wives to take turns in the sick-room during the day, while he and Robin mismanaged affairs down below between them.

Rob had had the general idea that a sailorman could turn his hand to pretty well anything. He found himself wofully mistaken. All those little drawers and boxes, and all their various contents, mixed themselves up till they set his brain spinning and became a perfect nightmare to him.

Certain regular lines he could handle without fear, and he eyed each caller with suspicious apprehension till he learned what was wanted, and the air of relief that came over him when it was only sugar, or tea, or butter, or lard, always set folk laughing. But when the article required was out of the general run he lost himself completely, and wandered about in helpless bewilderment, pulling open drawer after drawer and opening box after box with the vague hope that something might come of it. Now and again the customer, if an old one, would obligingly indicate where the thing usually came from and would tell him how much he ought to receive for it, and he was duly grateful. And if between them they failed to find it, Rob would slip off his shoes and steal up the creaking stairs and poke his head in at the bedroom door and ask in a hoarse whisper, 'Where's the dried apples?' or the candied peel, or the haricot beans, or whatever it was that was urgently needed below.

And the sick woman would give him her instructions in a

laboured whisper, and he would softly pick his way down again with a scrunpled face and his burden of information, and so fearful was he of forgetting it that he would not open his mouth until the article he was in search of was safely in his hands.

Robin helped as far as he was able, and his bird-like black eyes would often leap to a thing long before his father had found it; but his knowledge was scant and unpractical at best, and only the result of casual observation.

They made many ludicrous mistakes, and some of their customers were smart enough to take advantage of their ignorance. As a rule, however, they helped the two innocents as well as they could, and only laughed and corrected them when they were served with starch instead of tapioca, and borax instead of soda. Rob's descent into the arena of commerce gave him quite new ideas of his wife's capabilities, and when he ascended at night to the higher regions he got still deeper insight into the matters of which he had hitherto known little.

The quiet confidence of the sick woman made a great impression on him. She said very little, but she had no slightest fear of what lay ahead of her, and she was perfectly prepared for it.

Her only anxiety was in leaving them behind so ill-prepared for the battle of life. Rob assured her many times that they would get on all right, but she shook her head and remained doubtful. She knew by experience how much greater were the demands made upon one by a retail shop than by the seafaring life, and she knew how little fitted a sailorman was to cope with the smart people ashore. Her thoughts had never been much for herself, and now they were less so than ever.

Rob pondered matters deeply, and at times, in the night watches when his spell was on, she spoke to him of the things that were in her, as one who knew and would presently know still better.

'If you'd promise to quit the drink altogether, Rob, I'd die happy. You never done much at it, I know, and it's hard on a sailorman to give it up. But it's not you I'm thinking of. It's the boy. He'll have no one but you, and——'

'I'll give it up from now, Bess. So help me I'll never touch drop again.'

'Thank you, Rob,' she said, and died that night.

It was a prescient understanding of the ways of men, or possibly an opening of the eyes that were about to close, that got

that promise from him. For when she was gone his difficulties increased all round, and but for his pledged word he would inevitably have found his consolation at 'The Mariners' Rest,' which tempted him sorely at times, but whose swing doors he never once pushed open.

He and Robin whipped their brains over the business, and it was a sight to see them sitting of a night in the back parlour discussing the day's doings and making up their accounts, and trying to make up their minds what to order from the wholesaler who supplied most of their requirements, and whose traveller would be calling in a day or two.

Mrs. Nutgal used to stand behind her little counter and reel off the list as if it were a recitation, with just a glance here and there which seemed to pierce through drawers and boxes, with caustic comments anent previous discrepancies in qualities and quantities, and with an intimate acquaintance with every detail of her little business which Rob forlornly confessed he never could hope to attain to.

'A wonderful woman, Robin, my man,' he would say. 'What a head she had to be sure! And how in God's—I mean, how the dev—the dooce—er—*however* we're agoin' to get along without her—you and me—flattens me. Makes my head swim to think of all them drawers emptying of themselves day after day, and we got to keep 'em all full, and got to put the right thing in the right drawer and not get any of 'em mixed! You'll have to use them brains of yours, my man, and help your old dad through, or he'll be p'isoning someone with giving 'em saleratus instead of baking powder again.' At which reminiscence Robin would smile mournfully.

'We'll manage somehow, dad,' and he would make shift to look cheerful at the prospect. 'We'll be extra careful and ask 'em to make sure they've got the right stuff before they use it.'

'They'll have us, my man, some of 'em will. They're too smart for an old sailorman what doesn't know the rights and wrongs of things yet. D—dum 'em! I'm getting to doubt every one that comes into the shop. They're too dum smart. There was that Mrs. Bilboe to-day now. Take her. She swore she'd always had the tea out of that middle drawer at fourpence the quarter, an' everybody else gets it out the end drawer. She's a shark, that's what she is, my man, just a 'longshore shark, and they're the worst kind God ever made.'

'Change the drawers next time you see her coming,' suggested Robin brightly.

And old Rob looked at him open-mouthed for a moment, and then solemnly shook hands with him and said, 'You take after your mother, Robin. She'd been proud o' you if she'd lived to see this day.'

They got along somehow in a way, but it was a way that could only lead to one result.

It is not easy for a bluff sailorman to adapt himself to the little intricacies of commerce. It is the perfect understanding of these, even in so small a business as this, which makes all the difference between profit and loss. Poor old Rob rumbled his straggly hair through his fingers at night in the little back parlour and wondered however his wife had managed to make a living. He did his best during the day to look preternaturally knowing, but his customers knew better, and the traveller for Durtons' who replenished his small stock knew better still, and they all, customers and traveller, cracked cheery jokes with him and were as friendly as could be, but took little advantages of him all the same. Between the devil and the deep sea he found himself gradually getting on to the rocks, and it caused him much distress of mind and many sleepless nights.

He tried to jettison his conscience and sneak the little counter-advantages which form an essential part of the game; but it was against his nature, and he played his hand badly. He suffered far more from the poignant recollections of his attempts at short weight, and little pinchings here and there in his own favour, than any possible profit could have compensated for.

He seriously considered the idea of giving up the shop before it gave him up—as it undoubtedly would before long—and finding work of some kind. But work of any kind at sixty-five is no easy thing to find, and he knew it. And he groaned in the spirit, and sighed audibly over his pipe at night, and wondered what would be the end of it all, and when.

It tired him as it had tired his wife, and he came to understand just how she felt when she laid herself down at the last without the slightest wish ever to get up again, her only anxiety for those she was leaving behind.

He felt exactly the same. But for Cock Robin and the thought of him being left all alone and not well fitted, by accident, to fight his own way in the world, he would have laid himself down on

the bed any night and been thankful never to waken again. But Robin was a fact, and a fact that had wound itself in and out and all round his heart-strings since his mother died. He fairly worshipped the lad, and the love of him, when he hugged him close in his arms of a night and listened to his quiet breathing, was the one joy of his life. It made him feel rich in spite of the poverty that drew in upon them like a narrowing iron ring.

Gloomy thoughts played havoc with him at night. They hunted him like a pack of wolves, and the lonely traveller fled before them and hugged his boy the tighter in his arms.

Ah! how simple it would all have been but for the boy! How very much simpler and how very much sadder!

For himself, he could have gone into the Sailors' Home, or the workhouse, or underground, and cared little which. They treated you well at the Sailors' Home, but it wasn't always you could get in. And the workhouse could not possibly be anywhere near as bad as many of the ships he'd been on. And as to underground, well, he wasn't quite sure but what that would be best of all, as being a final settlement and not subject to any possibilities of further unpleasantness. There was a time when the thought of lying in earth did not commend itself to him. He used to recoil from it. But maybe, after all, it was just as satisfactory as being buried at sea. There were sharks and shrimps at sea if there were worms ashore. Sharks ashore, too, if it came to that. Take Mrs. Bilboe, now! And the thought of Mrs. Bilboe always urged him towards that natural gift of language against which, for Robin's sake, he had begun to wrestle manfully.

For Mrs. Bilboe, a burly widow woman with a moustache and four uncouth youngsters, had cast eyes of longing on the little shop, and she was quite willing to take over Rob and Robin as part of the stock and fixtures. She talked insinuatingly to the junior member of the firm—'Treacle!' said Robin himself—and she set her cap at old Rob in the most barefaced fashion, and shrugged defiant shoulders at neighbourly comment.

At times she even condescended to argue the matter with her commentators.

'Mr. Nutgal, he don't know the first thing 'bout keeping shop,' she said. 'He'll never make it pay. I would, and keep him in comfort for the rest of his life. Takes brains to run a shop nowadays, and he gets muddled, not being used to that kind o' work.'

Her wooing was early Norman in its forcefulness. With no

hope of attracting by gentle persuasiveness, she proceeded to pulverise the object of her attentions with a sense of his own shortcomings.

By way of proving his need of a guiding and helping hand she showed up his utter incapacity in a dozen ways every time she came into the shop, and he hated her worse each time she came.

'That tea ain't up to what it used to be, Mr. Nutgal,' she would say, 'and them dried apples ain't got no more smell in 'em than shavin's. Guess you ain't as smart a buyer as Mrs. Nutgal was.'

'Some folks is too smart for me, I doubt,' said Rob gloomily.

'Meaning——?'

'Meaning the folks I'm thinking of.'

'If I was a man——'

'Ah!'

'If I was a man it's not confessing to a thing like that I'd be after,' said Mrs. Bilboe.

'If you was a man——' began Rob, with a spark in his eyes.

'Yes——?'

'Nothen,' said Rob, restraining himself. 'Quarr'ling ain't business.'

'Quarr'ling? Bless me, who's talking o' quarr'ling, Mr. Nutgal? You'd have to go far before you'd find man or woman could say they'd ever quarr'led wi' Nancy Bilboe. And how are you, little man?' to Robin, who had come hopping up the steps on his crutch. 'Why, you're spryer with that crutch o' yours than most folks is wi' their two legs.'

'Treacle!' says Robin, and away into the parlour.

Mr. Nutgal knew what was in Mrs. Bilboe's mind quite as well as the neighbours did, and forewarned is forearmed. He would sooner have jumped into the harbour than let her marry him.

Things got worse and worse with him. He fell behind with his rent, and began to find it difficult to scrape up enough money to pay Mr. Polketty, the traveller from Durtons of Belcaster, who called once a month to collect his cash and take fresh orders. A smart, smoothspoken man was Mr. Polketty, and he needed to be. For Durtons were sharp as files, and took every possible advantage of the little shopkeepers among whom the bulk of their business lay. But they gave fairly long credit, and that covered many shortcomings in the eyes of their customers, who looked

after themselves as well as they could. Most of them depended for their very existence on Durtons, and if Durtons had closed their doors two-thirds of the smaller dealers within a hundred miles of Belcaster would perforce have done the same. They made lots of bad debts, of course, but the others paid for them, and Durtons managed somehow to make an excellent thing of it.

It was an essential part of Mr. Polketty's duties to nose out approaching disaster and to snatch what he could for the firm. The rest of his time was given to collecting cash, taking orders, and smoothing over and making allowances for the defects and defaults in the filling of the orders he had taken on his previous journey.

Rob had listened open-mouthed to his wife's deliverances to Mr. Polketty on the shortcomings of the firm and its goods, and had wondered at his imperturbability under the onslaught. But he did not know Mr. Polketty as well as Mr. Polketty knew his own business, and Rob never knew *his* own business well enough to talk to Mr. Polketty in the same strain.

Mrs. Nutgal had been a good customer to Durtons. If she had ever been able to get a little bit ahead she would have left them and done better. But on her death Mr. Polketty saw at once that Rob would never be a success as a shopkeeper, and though he was not without his feelings of compassion for the bluff old sea-dog, still business is business, and Durtons must not lose money, or Mr. Polketty might lose his place.

And so he had kept a sharp eye on things, and he had seen for some time past in a dozen little ways that before long he would have to stop supplies and step into possession.

He rather liked the boy. It was he first gave him the name of Cock Robin, and he always had a cheery word for him when they met. He wondered now and again what they would do when Durtons shut down on them, but it did not disturb his sleep at night.

Mr. Polketty was ascending the six steps that led up to Rob's shop one mid-day, when a thunderbolt took him in the waistcoat and doubled him up like a clasp-knife. When he had opened himself out again he picked Robin up off the steps and gasped :

'Well, young man, that's a funny way of saying how-d'ye-do.'

'Didn't see you,' gasped Robin.

'What's up? Shop on fire?'

'No, I'm prattising Light'us.'

'Eh? What's that?'

'I'm going to keep Light'us some time, an' I'm prattising going up and down steps.'

'I see. That's a good idea. Let's see you go up them now. I know you can come down quick enough.'

And Robin fitted his crutch and took a preliminary scuff along the level, and went up the steps like a bird.

'Bravo, Cock Robin!' clapped Mr. Polketty. 'You'll do, old man. Here's a medal for you,' and gave him a penny and told him to go and spend it while he had a talk with his father.

That talk left old Rob more despondent than ever. He had had to ask Mr. Polketty to give him extra time on a bill that was due, and Mr. Polketty had done so—on his signing a document which would put Durtons in possession of the business if he failed to pay in due course. It gave him another month, but he had very little hope of paying it even then, save and scrimp as he might, and he had cut rations down to bare living point for a long time past. And then he and Robin would have to walk out paupers—to the workhouse, or the Harbour, or wherever a final resting-place might offer.

That dismal month added many years to his age, and as it drew to an end his spirits sank till they could get no lower without oozing out into his boots. What would become of them he could not tell and dared not think. Sixty-five years and seven, and a suit of clothes each, and a small crutch! A slim outfit for the grim battle of life!

The thought of it curdled poor old Rob's feelings till he groaned aloud of a night and woke Cock Robin from his sleep, and to quiet him he had to tell the boy that the rheumatics had gripped him again, and poor little Cock Robin rubbed the aching place, as he supposed, till he fell asleep again. What a mighty relief it would have been if it had only been rheumatics! He had thought rheumatics bad enough at the time, but they were nothing to this. He knew not where to turn or what to do. The thought of the workhouse overlaid him like a nightmare. The Harbour drew him even more strongly. It was only the thought of Robin kept him back. If only he were alone how very little would it trouble him. As with his wife, he had come to the point of longing only to lie down and rest, and let the storms sweep by overhead as they chose.

But Robin! Poor little Cock Robin! How could he fight along alone? And the thought of him in the workhouse was

too terrible. Better, infinitely better, to think of him quietly underground.

In his agony of fear for the lad, his heart cried poignantly to the Power which the life of the seas had dimly taught him to recognise, just as he had more than once cried out for help in times of peril—sweet juice of bitterness squeezed out by sheer weight of woe—

‘God, take him sooner than have him suffer! Take him! Take him!’

And that seemed to him so much the better thing for the boy that the agonised cry became a continual prayer, though it never passed his lips in words. And sometimes, when he looked into Robin’s gleaming face with that cry in his heart, he groaned dolorously in the spirit and felt like a murderer.

And yet! And yet! He felt hopeless and broken, and the thought of the crippled lad in the workhouse was too much for him.

He dragged through the dark days somehow, with all his little world crumbling into ruins about him. And no darker state seemed possible to him.

Then one night Robin came in less blithely than usual, and it seemed to his father that the little white face looked peaked and pinched as he had never known it before.

‘Robin, ahoy! Where from, boy?’ asked the old man, essaying a spurt into cheerfulness which was very far from him.

‘Watching Light’us light up,’ said Robin, ‘an’ it were co-o-old,’ and the little teeth chattered and the little lips looked blue, and a hoarse cough broke from them which startled his father.

He hurried the boy to bed and piled blankets on him, and gave him a hot posset of bread and milk and rum such as he remembered his own mother giving him when he was a boy.

Robin fell into an uneasy sleep, and his father sat by the bedside watching him with gloomy apprehension. It dawned slowly on his tired soul that the answer to his broken calling was coming and that the lad was going.

Robin started up suddenly with a croak like the bark of a tortured dog, and sat choking convulsively, grasping for breath with his very hands, almost black in the face. His father sprang up in terror, and held him in his arms and patted him on the back, almost beside himself. But the boy fought through it and lay back, spent and gasping, and the old man sat down again, shaking

all over, and waited fearfully for the next spasm. It did not seem possible for the frail little body to stand much of that kind of work.

He had asked to have the boy taken, yet now when he seemed like going, the old man's heart was torn with a sense of loss and utter desolation.

To have no Cock Robin to chirp and gleam at him, to nestle warmly in his rough old arms in bed, to sit on his knee at night, to feel and handle and love! Why, what had he been thinking of? The one only thing he had left in all the world that was his very own, and that could and did love him in return. Part with Cock Robin? Down he fell on his knees by the bedside and prayed hard for a reversal of his former prayer.

'God, I'm an old fool and don't know rightly what I want. But don't take the boy! He's all I've got. Take everything else but leave me him! Leave me him! Leave me him!' and he went on murmuring the last words with his head in his hands and his thoughts running free.

'And yet—I dun know . . . if it's to bring him sorrow maybe he's better away. . . . I dun know what's best . . .' A long pause, and then, at last—crude and rough, but pure gold hot from the fire—the prayer of prayers that all must come to sooner or later: 'Do what Thee sees best Thysen, Lord, for I dunnot know.'

He heard the lusty crying of a child through the wall of the next house. Robin on the bed jerked his head back again with that terrible bark which sounded like death. Rob sprang to him again and gave him the comfort of his arms, and heartened him with hopeful words, and feared each moment to see the little limbs straighten out into unnatural quiet. But they came through that bout too, and as soon as the boy lay still the old man hammered on the wall as if he would beat a passage through with his fists. Presently he heard a knocking on the shop door downstairs, and he ran down and opened it and found his neighbour there.

'Why, what's up, Mr. Nutgal?' he asked.

'T' boy's dying, I'm afeard. Will you wait wi' him till I git doctor?'

'I'll send t' wife. She knows all 'about kids,' and in two minutes the wife came hurrying up the stairs.

'Croup!' she said, as soon as she heard Rob's tale. 'I lost one wi' it just about his size. You run for doctor. I'll wait wi' him. He'll maybe be quiet now till yo' git back. Go quick!'

No need to tell old Rob to go quick. He went for Robin's life, and he hauled the old Doctor back by one arm, crab-fashion, like a side-hitched tug bringing in a light ship against a cross gale.

The wife from next door had already lighted a fire in the room and put on the big kettle, and the Doctor nodded when he saw it.

'You've been here before?' he said.

'Ay!' said the woman. 'But he went all the same,' and she went back to her own youngsters, and the other two set to work to wrestle for the life of little Cock Robin.

When they had eased the constricted throat by means of hot water applications, and had the kettle steaming merrily into the room through a brown paper funnel which Rob deftly constructed, the Doctor sat down before the fire and drew the old man out. He was a student of more than medicine and would sooner read a man than any book that ever was written. And Rob, unstrung by his fears for Robin, told the genial old fellow all that was in him, and found relief in the telling. And the Doctor took it all in and mused upon it, and his musing bore fruit, as it had a way of doing.

'And what are you thinking of doing?' he asked.

'God knows! I dunnot,' said Rob gloomily. 'Work'us, I s'pose.'

'There ought to be some better way than that. We must look round,' said the Doctor thoughtfully. And Rob felt suddenly as if the dark clouds that enveloped him had opened and let through a ray of light.

Cock Robin had a pretty bad time of it. He had sat so long watching the Lighthouse light up that night that it came near to putting his own light out.

However, with the help of his father and the Doctor, he came through it all, croup and chills and fever. And it was a Cock Robin that looked as if it had gone through an unusually hard winter that sat up in bed at last and did justice to the good things the Doctor brought him with his own hands.

'Why, Cock Robin,' said the cheery old gentleman one day, 'you'll be hopping about as lively as ever in no time. What are you going to make of yourself when you grow big?'

'Keep Light'us,' said Robin, with sparkling eyes.

'Ay?' said the Doctor, taking a pinch of snuff and regarding him thoughtfully. 'But you couldn't get up and down the stairs.'

‘Cou’n’t I? You wait till you see. I bin prattising.’

‘It’s wonderful how he do go up and down ‘em,’ said Rob, who had come up with the Doctor, leaving the shop to take care of itself. ‘He can beat me at it by a long chalk.’

‘Ay, ay! Well now, its odd that idea should be in him, very odd. I’m on the Harbour Trust, you know, and old Rattray, out there on the Light, is getting pretty well on. He can take his pension any time. I was thinking of asking you if you’d care for the post, Mr. Nutgal, but I was afraid the boy’s lameness would stand in your way. It’s eighteen shillings a week and food and lodging found. What do you say?’

‘I says YES!’ said Cock Robin with a shout. ‘I’d sooner keep a Light’us than be anything—’cept maybe it was a doctor.’

Old Rob did not speak, but the hairy brown hand he shoved out towards the Doctor shook with the things he left unsaid.

JOHN OXENHAM.

A Shepherd of the Downs.

I.

THE old shepherd whose memories, mostly about wild life, I am about to narrate is a native of the village called Lufton in this article, situated in the heart of that most out-of-the-world and primitive district in southern England—the South Wiltshire Downs. One of his memories was of an old shepherd named John, whose acquaintance he made when a very young man—John being at that time seventy-eight years old and on Lufton farm, where he had served for an unbroken period of close on sixty years. Though so aged he was still head shepherd, and he continued to hold that place seven years longer—until his master, who had taken over old John with the place, finally gave up the farm and farming at the same time. He, too, was getting past work and wished to spend his declining years in his native village in an adjoining parish, where he owned some house and cottage property. And now what was to become of the old shepherd, since the new tenant had brought his own men with him?—and he moreover considered that John, at eighty-five, was too old to tend a flock on the hills, even of tags. His old master, anxious to help him, tried to get him some employment in the village where he wished to stay; and failing in this, he at last offered him a cottage rent free in the village where he was going to live himself, and, in addition, twelve shillings a week for the rest of his life. It was in those times an exceedingly generous offer, but John refused it. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘I be going to stay in my own native village, and if I can’t make a living the parish ’ll have to keep I; but keep or not keep, here I be and here I be going to stay, where I were borned.’

From this position the stubborn old man refused to be moved, and there at Lufton his master had to leave him, although not without having first made him a small provision.

The way in which my old friend, Stephen Bawcombe, told the story, plainly revealed his own feeling in the matter. He understood and had the keenest sympathy for old John, dead now over half a century; or rather, let us say, resting very peacefully in that green spot by Lufton church, where as a small boy he had played among the old gravestones as far back in time as the middle of the eighteenth century. But old John had long survived wife and children, and having no one but himself to think of was at liberty to end his days where he pleased. Not so with Stephen, for, though his undying passion for home and his love of the shepherd's calling was as great as John's, he was not so free, and he was compelled at last to leave his native downs, which he may never see again, to settle for the remainder of his days in another part of the country.

Early in life he 'caught a chill' through long exposure to wet and cold in winter; this brought on rheumatic fever and a malady of the thigh, which finally affected the whole limb and made him lame for life. Thus handicapped he had continued as shepherd for close on fifty years, during which his sons and daughters had grown up, married, and gone away, mostly to a considerable distance, leaving their aged parents alone once more. Then the wife, who was a strong woman and of an enterprising temper, found an opening for herself at a distance from home where she could start a little business. Stephen indignantly refused to give up shepherding in his place to take part in so unheard-of an adventure; but after a year or more of life in his lonely hut among the hills and cold empty cottage in the village, he at length tore himself away from that beloved spot and set forth on the longest journey of his life—about forty-five miles—to join her and help in the work of her new home. And here a few years later I found him, aged seventy-two, but owing to his increasing infirmities looking considerably more. When he considers that his father, a shepherd before him on those Wiltshire downs, lived to eighty-six, and his mother to eighty-four, and that both were vigorous and led active lives almost to the end, he thinks it strange that his own work should be so soon done. For in heart and mind he is still young; he does not want to rest yet.

I was at first struck with the singularity of Stephen's appearance, and later by the expression of his eyes. A very tall, big-boned, lean, round-shouldered man, he was uncouth almost to the verge of grotesqueness, and walked painfully with the aid of a stick, dragging his shrunken and shortened bad leg. His head

was long and narrow, and his high forehead, long nose, long chin, and long coarse grey whiskers worn like a beard on his throat, produced a goat-like effect. This was heightened by the ears and eyes. The big ears stood out from his head, and owing to a peculiar bend or curl in the membrane at the top they looked at certain angles almost pointed. The hazel eyes were wonderfully clear, but that quality was less remarkable than the unhuman intelligence in them—fawn-like eyes that gazed steadily at you as one may gaze through the window, open back and front, of a house at the landscape beyond. This peculiarity was a little disconcerting at first, when after making his acquaintance out of doors I went in uninvited and sat down with him at his own fireside. The busy old wife talked of this and that, and hinted as politely as she knew how that I was in her way. To her practical peasant mind there was no sense in my being there. ‘He be a stranger to we, and we be strangers to he.’ Stephen was silent, and his clear eyes showed neither annoyance nor pleasure but only their native wild alertness, but the caste feeling is always less strong in the hill shepherd than in other men who are on the land; in some cases it will vanish at a touch, and it was so in this one. A canary in a cage hanging in the kitchen served to introduce the subject of birds captive and birds free. I said that I liked the little yellow bird, and was not vexed to see him in a cage, since he was cage-born; but I considered that those who caught wild birds and kept them prisoners did not properly understand things. This happened to be Stephen’s view. He had a curiously tender feeling about the little wild birds, and one amusing incident of his boyhood which he remembered came out during our talk. He was out on the down one summer day in charge of his father’s flock, when two boys of the village on a ramble in the hills came and sat down on the turf by his side. One of them had a titlark, or meadow pipit, which he had just caught, in his hand, and there was a hot argument as to which of the two was the lawful owner of the poor little captive. The facts were as follow. One of the boys having found the nest became possessed with the desire to get the bird. His companion at once offered to catch it for him, and together they withdrew to a distance and sat down and waited until the bird returned to sit on the eggs. Then the little bird-catcher returned to the spot, and creeping quietly up to within five or six feet of the nest threw his hat so that it fell over the sitting titlark; but after having thus secured it he refused to give it up. The dispute waxed hotter as they sat there, and at last

when it got to the point of threats of cuffs on the ear and slaps on the face they agreed to fight it out, the victor to have the titlark. The bird was then put under a hat on the smooth turf a few feet away, and the boys proceeded to take off their jackets and roll up their shirt-sleeves, after which they faced one another, and were just about to begin when Stephen, thrusting out his crook, turned the hat over and away flew the titlark.

The boys, deprived of their bird and of an excuse for a fight, would gladly have discharged their fury on Stephen, but they durst not, seeing that his dog was lying at his side; they could only threaten and abuse him, call him bad names, and finally put on their coats and walk off.

That pretty little tale of a titlark was but the first of a long succession of memories of his early years, with half a century of shepherding life on the downs, which came out during our talks on many autumn and winter evenings as we sat by his kitchen fire. The earlier of these memories were always the best to me, because they took one back sixty years or more, to a time when there was more wildness in the earth than now and a nobler wild animal life. Even more interesting were some of the memories of his father, Isaac Bawcombe, whose time went back to the early years of the nineteenth century. Stephen cherished an admiration and reverence for his father's memory which were almost a worship, and he loved to describe him as he appeared in his old age, when upwards of eighty. He was erect and tall, standing six feet two in height, well proportioned, with a clean-shaved florid face, clear dark eyes, and silver-white hair; and at this late period of his life he always wore the dress of an old order of pensioners to which he had been admitted—a soft broad white felt hat, thick boots and brown leather leggings, and a very long fawn-coloured cloth overcoat with brass buttons.

According to Stephen, he must have been an exceedingly fine specimen of a man, both physically and morally. Born in 1800, he began following a flock as a boy, and continued as shepherd on the same farm until he was sixty, never rising to more than seven shillings a week and nothing found, since he lived in the cottage where he was born and which he inherited from his father. That a man of his fine powers, a head shepherd on a large hill-farm, should have had no better pay than that down to the year 1860, after nearly half a century of work in one place, seems almost incredible. Even his sons, as they grew up to man's estate, advised him to ask for an increase, but he would

not. Seven shillings he had always had; and that small sum, with something his wife earned by making highly finished smock-frocks, had been sufficient to keep them all in a decent way; and his sons were now all earning their own living. But Stephen got married, and resolved to leave the old farm at Lufton to take a better place at a distance from home, at Warminster, which had been offered him. He would there have a cottage to live in, nine shillings a week, and a sack of barley for his dog. At that time the shepherd had to keep his own dog—no small expense to him when his wages were no more than six to eight shillings a week. But Stephen was his father's favourite son, and the old man could not endure the thought of losing sight of him; and at last, finding that he could not persuade him not to leave the old home, he became angry, and told him that if he went away to Warminster for the sake of the higher wages and barley for the dog he would disown him! But Stephen went, for, though he loved his father, he had a young wife who pulled the other way; and he was absent for years, and when he returned the old man's heart had softened, so that he was glad to welcome him back to the old home.

Meanwhile, at that humble home at Lufton great things had happened, and old Isaac was no longer shepherding on the downs, but living very comfortably in his own cottage in the village. The change came about in this way.

The downland shepherds, Stephen said, were as a rule clever poachers; and it is really not surprising, when one considers the temptation to a man with a wife and several hungry children, besides himself and a dog, to feed out of about five shillings a week. But old Bawcombe was an exception: he would take no game, furred or feathered, nor, if he could prevent it, allow another to take anything from the land fed by his flock. Stephen and his brothers, when as boys and youths they began their shepherding, sometimes caught a rabbit, or their dog caught and killed one without their encouragement; but, however the thing came into their hands, they could not take it home on account of their father. Now it happened that the squire was a keen sportsman, and that in several successive years he found a wonderful difference in the amount of game at one spot among the hills and in all the rest of his hill-property. The only explanation the head-keeper could give was that Isaac Bawcombe tended his flock on that down where rabbits and hares and partridges were so plentiful. And one autumn day the squire was shooting over that down, and seeing a big man in a smock-frock standing

motionless, crook in hand, regarding him, he called out to his keeper, who was with him, 'Who is that big man?' and was told that it was the shepherd Bawcombe. The squire pulled some money out of his pocket, and said, 'Give him this half-crown, and thank him for the good sport I've had to-day.' But after the coin had been given the squire still remained standing there, thinking perhaps that he had not yet sufficiently rewarded the man; and at last, before turning away, he shouted, 'Bawcombe, that's not all. You'll get something more by and by.'

Isaac had not long to wait for the something more, and it turned out to be not the hare or brace of birds he had half expected. It happened that the squire was one of the trustees of an ancient charity which provided for six of the most deserving old men of the parish of Lufton; now, one of the six had recently died, and on the squire's recommendation Bawcombe had been elected to fill the vacant place. The letter from Salisbury informing him of his election and commanding his presence in that city filled him with astonishment; for, though he was sixty years old and the father of four sons now out in the world, he could not now regard himself as an old man, for he had never known a day's illness, nor an ache, and was famed in all that neighbourhood for his great physical strength and endurance. And now, with his own cottage to live in, eight shillings a week, and his grand pensioner's garments, with certain other benefits, and a shilling a day besides which his old master paid him for some small services at the farmhouse in the village, Isaac found himself very well off, and he enjoyed his prosperous state for twenty-six years. Then, in 1886, his old wife fell ill and died, and no sooner was she in her grave than he too began to droop; and soon, before the year was out, he followed her, because, as the neighbours said, they had always been a loving pair and one could not 'bide without the other.

After all that had been told to me about the elder Bawcombe's life and character, it came somewhat as a shock to learn that at one period during his early manhood he had indulged in one form of poaching—a sport which had a marvellous fascination for the common people of England in former times, but was pretty well extinguished during the first quarter of the last century. Deer he had taken; and the whole tale of the deer-stealing, which was a common offence in that part of Wiltshire down to about 1820 or 1830, so far as I can make out, sounds strange at the present day.

Large herds of deer were kept at that time at an estate not far

from Lufton, and it often happened that many of the animals broke bounds and roamed singly and in small bands over the hills. When deer were observed in the open, certain of the villagers would settle on some plan of action; watchers would be sent out not only to keep an eye on the deer but on the keepers too. Much depended on the state of the weather and the moon, as some light was necessary; then, when the conditions were favourable and the keepers had been watched to their cottages, the gang would go out for a night's hunting. But it was a dangerous sport, as the keepers also knew that deer were out of bounds and they would form some counter-plan, and one peculiarly nasty plan they had was to go out about three or four o'clock in the morning and secrete themselves somewhere close to the village to intercept the poachers on their return.

Bawcombe, who never in his life associated with the village idlers and frequenters of the alehouse, had no connection with these men. His expeditions were made alone on some dark unpromising night, when the regular poachers were in bed and asleep. He would steal away after bedtime, or would go out ostensibly to look after the sheep, and, if fortunate, would return in the small hours with a deer on his back. Then, helped by his mother, with whom he lived (for this was when he was a young unmarried man, about 1820), he would quickly skin and cut up the carcass, stow the meat away in some secret place, and bury the head, hide, and offal deep in the earth; and when morning came it would find Isaac out following his flock as usual, with no trace of guilt or fatigue in his rosy cheeks and clear honest eyes.

This was a very astonishing story to hear from Stephen, but to suspect him of inventing or of exaggerating was impossible to any one who knew him. And we have seen that Isaac Bawcombe was an exceptional man—physically a kind of Alexander Selkirk of the Wiltshire downs. And he, moreover, had a dog to help him—one as superior in speed and strength to the ordinary sheep-dog as he himself was to the ruck of his fellow-men. It was only after much questioning on my part that Stephen brought himself to tell me of these ancient adventures, and finally to give a detailed account of how his father came to take his first deer. It was in the depth of winter—bitterly cold, with a strong north wind blowing on the snow-covered downs—when one evening Isaac caught sight of two deer out on his sheepwalk. In that part of Wiltshire, between Wilton and Cranborne Chase, there is a famous monument of antiquity, known as the 'Ditch,' a vast

mound-like wall, with a deep depression or foss running at its side. It is many leagues in length, lying across hills and valleys and level fields, an immense green rope of earth which the downland country wears like a girdle. Now, it happened that on the highest part of the down, where the wall or mound was most exposed to the blast, the snow had been blown clean off the top, and the deer were feeding here on the short turf, keeping to the ridge, so that, outlined against the sky, they had become visible to Isaac at a great distance.

He saw and pondered. These deer, just now, while out of bounds, were no man's property, and it would be no sin to kill and eat one—if he could catch it!—and it was a season of bitter want. For many, many days he had eaten his barley bread, and on some days barley-flour dumplings, and had been content with this poor fare; but now the sight of these animals made him crave for meat with an intolerable craving, and he determined to do something to satisfy it.

He went home and had his poor supper, and when it was dark set forth again with his dog. He found the deer still feeding on the mound. Stealing softly along among the furze-bushes, he got the black line of the mound against the starry sky, and by-and-by as he moved along the black figures of the deer, with their heads down, came into view. He then doubled back and, proceeding some distance, got down into the foss and stole forward to them again under the wall. His idea was that on taking alarm they would immediately make for the forest which was their home, and would probably pass near him. They did not hear him until he was within sixty yards, and then bounded down from the wall, over the dyke, and away, but in almost opposite directions—one alone making for the forest; and on this one the dog was set. Out he shot like an arrow from the bow, and after him ran Isaac 'as he had never runned afore in all his life.' For a short space deer and dog in hot pursuit were visible in the snow, then the darkness swallowed them up as they rushed down the slope; but in less than half a minute a sound came back to Isaac, flying, too, down the incline—the long wailing cry of a deer in distress. The dog had seized his quarry by one of the front legs, a little above the hoof, and held it fast, and they were struggling on the snow when Isaac came up and flung himself upon his victim, then thrust his knife through its windpipe 'to stop its noise.' Having killed it, he threw it on his back and went home, not by the turnpike, nor by any road or path, but over fields and through copses,

until he got to the back of his mother's cottage. There was no door on that side, but there was a window, and when he had rapped at it and his mother had opened it, he without a word thrust the dead deer through and made his way round to the front.

That was how he slew his first deer. How the others were taken I do not know : I wish I did, since this one exploit of a Wiltshire shepherd has more interest for me than I find in fifty narratives of elephants slaughtered wholesale with explosive bullets, written by our fifty most glorious Nimrods.

A large number of dogs used in hunting the deer were kept not far from Lufton, and were fed by the keepers in a very primitive fashion. Old horses past use were brought and slaughtered for the dogs. The horse would be killed and stripped of his hide away in the woods somewhere and left for the hounds to batten on the flesh, tearing at and fighting over it like jackals. When only partially consumed the carcass would be putrid, and another horse would be killed at some other spot perhaps a mile away, and the pack would start feeding afresh there. The result of so much carrion lying about the land was that numbers of ravens were attracted to the place, and they were so common as to be seen in scores together. Later, when the deer-hunting sport declined in the neighbourhood and the dogs were no longer fed on carrion, the birds decreased year by year, and when Stephen was a boy of ten their former excessive abundance was but a memory. But he remembers that they were still fairly common, and that it was a belief among the shepherds that when one of these birds was seen hovering over a flock uttering his dismal croak a ewe or lamb was going to die.

This of his raven stories is worth relating. It was an incident of his boyhood which had very deeply impressed him. One fine day he was on the down with an elder brother, when they heard the familiar croak and spied three birds at a distance engaged in a fight in the air. Two of the birds were in pursuit of the third, and rose alternately to rush upon and strike at their victim from above. They were coming down from a considerable height, and at last were directly over the boys, not more than forty or fifty feet from the ground ; and the youngsters were amazed at their fury, the loud rushing sound of their wings, as of a torrent, and of their deep hoarse croak and savage barking cries. Then they began to rise again, the hunted bird trying to keep above his enemies, they in their turn striving to rise higher still so as to rush down upon him from overhead ; and in this way they

towered higher and higher, their barking cries coming fainter and fainter back to earth, until the boys, not to lose sight of them, cast themselves down flat on their backs, and, continuing to gaze up, saw them at last no bigger than three 'leetle blackbirds.' Then they vanished, but the boys still lying on their backs kept their eyes fixed on the same spot, and by and by first one black speck reappeared, then a second, and they soon saw that two birds were swiftly coming down to earth. They fell swiftly and silently and finally pitched upon the down not more than a couple of hundred yards from the boys. The hunted bird had evidently succeeded in throwing them off and escaping. Probably it was one of their own young, for the ravens' habit is when their young are fully grown to hunt them out of the neighbourhood, or when they cannot drive them off to kill them.

Whether the birds bred in that neighbourhood or not Stephen could not say—he had 'never heard tell of a nestie'; but he had once seen the nest of another species which is supposed never to breed in this country. He was a small boy at the time, when one day an old shepherd of Lufton going out from the village saw Stephen, and calling to him said, 'You're the boy that likes birds; if you'll come with me I'll show 'e what no man never seed afore'; and Stephen fired with curiosity followed him away to a distance from home, out from the downs, into the woods and to a place where he had never been, where there was bracken and heath with birch and thorn trees scattered about. On cautiously approaching a clump of birches they saw a big thrush-like bird fly out of a large nest about ten feet from the ground, and settle on a tree close by, where it was joined by its mate. The old man pointed out that it was a felt or fieldfare, a thrush nearly as big as the missel thrush but different in colour, and he said that it was a bird that came to England in flocks in winter from no man knew where, far off in the north, and always went away before breeding-time. This was the only felt he had ever seen breeding in this country, and he 'didn't believe that no man had ever seed such a thing before.' He would not climb the tree to see the eggs or even go very near it, for fear of disturbing the birds.

This man, Stephen said, was a great one for birds: he knew them all, but seldom spoke of what he knew; it was all for his private pleasure. And there were memories of other old men of the village equally interesting. One was of Dan'l Burdon, a labourer on the farm where Isaac Bawcombe was head shepherd, and Stephen retained a vivid recollection of this person, who had a profound gravity and was the most silent man in the village.

He was always thinking about hidden treasure and all his spare time was spent in seeking for it. On a Sunday morning, or in the evening after working hours, he would take a spade or pick and go away over the hills on his endless search after 'something he could not find.' He opened some of the largest barrows, making trenches six to ten feet deep through them, but found nothing to reward him. One day he took Stephen with him, and they went to a part of the down where there were certain depressions in the turf of a circular form and six to seven feet in circumference. Burdon had observed these basin-like depressions and had thought it possible they marked the place where things of value had been buried in past ages. To begin he cut the turf all round and carefully removed it, then dug and found a thick layer of flints. These removed, he came upon a deposit of ashes and charred wood. And that was all. Burdon without a word set to work to put it all back in its place—ashes and wood, and earth and flints, and having trod it firmly down he carefully replaced the turf, then leaning on his spade gazed silently at the spot for a space of several minutes. At last he spoke, 'Maybe, Stephen, you've heard tell about what the Bible says of burnt sacrifice. Well, now, I be of opinion that it were here. Them people the Bible says about, they come up here to sacrifice on Blue Bottle Down, and these be the places where they made their fires.'

Then he shouldered his spade and started home, the boy following. Stephen's comment was: 'I didn't say nothing to un because I were only a leetel boy and he were a old man; but I knowed better than that all the time, because them people in the Bible they was never in England at all, so how could they sacrifice on Blue Bottle Down in Wiltshere?'

It was no idle boast on his part. Stephen and his brothers had been taught their letters when very small, and the Bible was their one book, which they read not only in the evenings at home but out on the downs during the day when they were with the flock. His extreme familiarity with the whole Scripture narrative was a marvel to me; but it was also very strange, considering how intelligent a man he was, that his life-long reading of that one book had made no change in his rude 'Wiltshere' speech.

Stephen had many interesting stories of sheep-dogs to tell, and perhaps the best of them was about Jack—a 'tarrable good dog,' owned by his father. He was short-haired like the old Wiltshire sheep-dog, but black instead of the usual colour—blue with a sprinkling of small black spots. This animal had an

intense hatred of adders and never failed to kill every one he found. But he knew that they were dangerous enemies to tackle, and on catching sight of one instantly his hair would bristle up and he would stand as if paralysed for some moments, glaring at it and gnashing his teeth, then springing like a cat upon it he would seize it in his mouth only to hurl it from him to a distance. This action he would repeat until the adder was dead, and Isaac would then put it under a furze-bush to take it home and hang it on a certain gate. The farmer too, like the dog, hated adders, and paid his shepherd sixpence for every one his dog killed.

One day Stephen, then a boy of ten, was out with the flock, with one of his brothers amusing themselves in their usual way on the turf with nine morris-men and the shepherd's puzzle, when all at once their mother appeared unexpectedly on the scene. It was her custom, when the boys were sent out with the flock, to make expeditions to the downs just to see what they were up to; and hiding her approach by keeping to a hedge-side or by means of the furze-bushes, she would sometimes come upon them with disconcerting suddenness. On that occasion just where the boys had been playing there was a low, stout furze-bush, so dense and flat-topped that one could use it as a seat, and his mother taking off and folding her shawl placed it on the bush and sat down on it to rest herself after her long walk. 'I can see her now,' said Stephen, 'sitting on that fuzz-bush, in her smock and leggings, with a big hat like a man's on her head—for that's how she's dressed.' But in a few moments she jumped up, crying out that she felt a snake under her, and snatched off the shawl, and there, sure enough, out of the middle of the flat bush-top appeared the head of an adder, flicking out its tongue. The dog too saw it, dashed at the bush, forcing his muzzle and head into the middle of it, seized the serpent by its body and plucked it out and threw it from him, only to follow it up and kill it in the usual way.

Stephen had one amusing anecdote about a dog of his own. This animal was clever at catching hedgehogs, rabbits, and occasionally a cornerake, and when he caught anything his custom was to take it and deposit it at his master's feet. It happened that an old woman out of the Warminster workhouse came to the village, where nobody knew her, in quest of employment, and was engaged by the farmer to scare rooks. The birds had just then begun to damage the swedes, and the farmer thought that even if she was not very active she would serve well enough as a scarecrow in the field. The old woman owned two things

she greatly prized—a book and a pair of spectacles—and it was her custom to spend the day sitting, spectacles on nose and book in hand, reading among the turnips. Her spectacles were so ‘tarrable’ good that they suited all old eyes, and when this was discovered they were in great request in the village, and every person who wanted to do a bit of fine sewing or anything requiring young vision in old eyes would borrow them for the purpose. One day the old woman returned full of trouble from the fields—she had lost her spectacles ; she must, she thought, have lent them to someone in the village on the previous evening and then forgotten all about it. But no one had them, and the mysterious loss of the spectacles was discussed and lamented by everybody. A day or two later Stephen came through the turnips on his way home, the dog at his heels, and when he got to his cottage the dog came round and placed himself square before his master and deposited the lost spectacles at his feet. He had found them in the turnip-field over a mile from home, and though but a dog he remembered that he had seen them on people’s noses and in their hands and knew that they must therefore be valuable—not to himself, but to that larger and more important kind of dog that goes about on its hind legs.

Another clever poaching-dog Stephen told of belonged to a shepherd on the farm who was often chaffed by his comrades on account of the extraordinary length of his shepherd’s crook. It was like a lance or pole, being twice the usual length. But he had a use for it. This shepherd used to make hares’ forms on the down in all suitable places, forming them so cunningly that no one seeing them by chance would have believed they were the work of human hands. The hares certainly made use of them. When out with his flock he would visit these forms, walking quietly past them at a distance of twenty to thirty feet, his dog following at his heels. On catching sight of a hare crouching in a form he would drop a word and the dog would instantly stand still and remain fixed and motionless, while the shepherd went on but in a circle so as gradually to approach the form. Meanwhile the hare would keep its eyes fixed on the dog, paying no attention to the man, until by and by the long staff would be swung round and a blow descend on the poor silly head from the opposite side, and if the blow was not powerful enough to stun or disable the hare, the dog would have it before it got three yards from the cosy nest prepared for its destruction.

W. H. HUDSON.

Prince Karl.

BY H. C. BAILEY.

CHAPTER IX.

THE SILENCE OF PÈRE JOSEPH.

ALL that night Dorothea lay sleepless, restless, wrung with pain, with a frightened woman watching by her side; and at last she grew quieter and lay still on her face moaning. Her little white arms hung limply over the pillow, and she did not heed the woman who touched them gently and shivered and drew back again as she felt them damp and cold. She pressed her face against the bed, and her body quivered and shuddered; her love, her husband, the man to whom she had given herself up joyfully, had betrayed her, and the pain of it hurt her like shame.

Under the same roof Prince Ludwig slept calmly with placid, tranquil face, and never a dream of what he had done or what he might do yet. And the warm west wind roared round the turrets of Lichtenstein Castle and the rain dashed and beat at the new-spread sand in the middle of the courtyard. While the storm came down from heaven to the Lichtenstein hills to wash away the blood, the Capuchin on his knees in the little guard-room prayed to God and the Mother of God that it might be his to do justice on Prince Ludwig von Lichtenstein for the works of that day.

Forty miles away Karl of Erbach rode out from his camp at midnight with a regiment of horse and marched on Lichtenstein. Beside him rode the man who had been Lichtenstein's seneschal that morning, the Baron Hildebrand von Schwartzsee. But on the terrace at Lichtenstein, in the wind and the driving rain, the Vicomte de Turenne paced to and fro, with wild thoughts running in his head—such thoughts as come to a man when fate has been

too strong for him and too quick. He planned vengeance on Ludwig von Lichtenstein in this way and that, and each was crueller than the one that had gone before; and then he stopped in his walk and laughed at himself; vengeance on Ludwig, would that aid Dorothea? The pure childish face, the frank blue eyes came up before his sight—how could he help Dorothea? Again he began to scheme and plot in mad crafty folly. And he knew that his plans were madness and folly, but still the crafty brain worked on and on.

In the morning Prince Ludwig was told of the two who had come last night to the castle, and he hurried to the little guard-room.

‘My dear father, what lodging is this for an envoy of France?’ he cried as he ran into the room holding out his hands in eager welcome. ‘Faith, Lichtenstein is disgraced.’

The Capuchin bowed.

‘Your Highness says too much,’ he answered coldly.

‘Nay, I will not belie my words. Come with me, my dear father.’

The two crossed the courtyard to Prince Ludwig’s own room, and the Capuchin saw Turenne and beckoned to him. Ludwig cried to a lackey to bring food, but the Capuchin waved his hand.

‘I have eaten,’ said he. He sat down before Prince Ludwig and Turenne stood by his chair.

‘This is a delight I had not expected, my dear father,’ said Ludwig with a smile and a bow.

‘Weissberg has fallen,’ said the Capuchin slowly with his eyes on Prince Ludwig’s face.

‘A grave loss,’ said Ludwig, and shook his head. ‘I learnt from the Baron de Creil how much you would feel it.’

The Capuchin with his heavy grey eyebrows frowning darkly above his eyes said:

‘Prince Maximilian of Solgau is—murdered.’

‘Murdered?’ said Ludwig, quickly. ‘He was condemned by the Baron de Creil. Prince Maximilian himself accepted the sentence.’ A short, sharp laugh came from Turenne; but Père Joseph sat silent. Ludwig looked quickly at Turenne and turned away from his flashing eyes.

‘It is, indeed, true,’ he said, uneasily. He hardly knew he was playing his game ill. He could think of little but the stern angry eyes of the two Frenchmen. ‘He thought the loss of the town had disgraced him. He accepted the sentence.’

Père Joseph sat silent.

'And the sentence was passed by the Baron de Creil and the Captain du Plessis to satisfy France. I had no part in it, your Excellency. I did not sign the order. I protested; it was done for the sake of France.'

And Père Joseph sat silent. Ludwig sprang up, flushing.

'In the name of God, what would you have?' he cried angrily. 'A man your own officers condemn—you come to me and talk of murder! Am I to answer for your men's work? By God, am I to answer to you at all?'

And still Père Joseph sat silent. Ludwig broke out again.

'I am your ally, but not your slave. What is it to me what your men do? What would you have of me?' he cried, seeing the steady, stern eyes were on him still. 'Answer!' he screamed, and he took a step towards the monk and raised his hand. Turenne's sword flashed out:

'Back!' he said harshly; and Ludwig changed colour and stumbled into his chair.

But still Père Joseph sat silent. A heavy step rang on the stair with the clash and jingle of spurs; by the door it paused, and the three men silent within heard a murmur from the guard, and then a loud voice crying:

'Prince Ludwig will give audience to the Marshal of Solgau,' and Karl of Erbach strode in. The stains of the road were on his cloak and boots; his hat was wet and bedraggled; but the three others had no eyes for this as he stood with his gloved hand in his swordbelt, looking sharply round the room:

'Who has done this?' he cried.

The Capuchin, fumbling in his gown, pulled out the warrant and held it out to him. Karl read it and drew in his breath.

'So,' he said, with a glance at Père Joseph and Turenne; and his hand closed on the parchment. 'And this was done in the castle of Lichtenstein?' he cried, looking down at Ludwig.

'No work of mine,' said Ludwig lightly. 'If Solgau takes it ill—if Solgau will be repaid—ask France, Count of Erbach!'

'Are murders often done in your castle without your will?' said the Count of Erbach sternly. 'I did not come to haggle over a crime. To you, your Highness, and you, sir,' he bowed stiffly to Ludwig and the Capuchin—'Solgau and the Prince of Solgau must speak. I come to take back the Princess Dorothea.'

Turenne started; his frowning face relaxed, and he bent over the chair to whisper to the Capuchin. The old monk, grown grey in statecraft, nodded slightly, and his eyes lit up as he shot

one quick glance at Karl of Erbach and turned again to Ludwig. But Ludwig, too, saw what it meant, and for all he was a coward he took heart to face these big stern foes; he fought for the crown of Solgau.

'These are strange words,' he said proudly. 'You forget your place, Count of Erbach. The Princess Dorothea is my wife, and I am Prince in Lichtenstein.'

'I forget nothing,' said the Count of Erbach, 'least of all how the house of Solgau has fared in Lichtenstein. I come to take the Princess of Solgau back to her own land.'

'I do not suffer insults,' cried Ludwig. 'Go, sir!' and he pointed to the door. But Karl of Erbach did not move, and the Capuchin spoke quickly and softly:

'Since the Prince von Lichtenstein has shown us how much the word of France weighs with him, he will not refuse me this boon. Let the Princess Dorothea go back to her father.'

Karl looked down at the monk in surprise, and Père Joseph met his glance steadily. But Ludwig, looking venomously from one to the other, fell on the eyes of the Vicomte de Turenne:

'It is an insult,' he said feebly. 'She will not go'; for he thought Dorothea still loved him.

'Ask her,' said Turenne. He thought that could not be.

'It is but a little thing to ask beside the death of a Prince,' said the Capuchin softly. Ludwig rose slowly and walked towards the door.

'I will ask her, then,' he said over his shoulder. But Turenne pushed by him roughly.

'We will not trouble your Highness,' he said, and he opened the door and called the lieutenant.

'The Marshal of Solgau begs audience of the Princess Dorothea,' he said quickly. Then he turned and walked up to the Count of Erbach, who watched him in surprise. He took Karl by the arm and stepped aside into the window.

'Count, we deal with a knave. Believe me, we are no worse than fools,' he said softly. Karl looked at him sternly. 'I tell you no fine stories. It was not by our will,' and he nodded at the Capuchin. 'I only give you my word.' For a moment the two men looked in each other's faces, then Karl bowed.

'I see that is true, monsieur,' said he.

The Princess came in, and Karl, turning, started and caught his breath and clapped his hand on his sword. This was not the light-hearted girl he had known at Solgau—a girl with dancing

eyes and smiling lips and lithe light step. He saw a woman who had borne the hardest of all the blows that can be dealt to her kind; a woman whose cheeks were pale, whose eyes were weary, who came listlessly in and looked fearfully round the room seeking him. He took a step forward, fell on his knee and kissed her hand.

‘I come to take your Highness back to Solgau.’

She shrank back in her chair.

‘Ah, no,’ she cried; ‘I can never go back to Solgau.’ And Ludwig sighed with relief that his wife, too, was a fool.

Karl rose slowly to his feet.

‘Not go to Solgau?’ he asked slowly; he paused for a moment. ‘It is with the good will of the Prince von Lichtenstein. Let me take your Highness back to Solgau in safety and honour,’ and at that word she laughed.

‘No, no; I cannot go,’ she cried wildly. ‘Count—Count!’ She beckoned to him and he knelt by her side. ‘Do not speak of me to my father,’ she whispered. He bowed his head over her hand and kissed it.

‘Come back with me, Dorothea!’ he said softly, holding her hand in his.

‘Do not ask me, do not ask me!’ she cried, and drew her hand away. And Prince Ludwig was surprised that she loved him so much. But only the Capuchin understood.

‘We trouble her Highness,’ he said, and he rose slowly. ‘Prince Ludwig, I beg you excuse us. Come, Turenne,’ for Turenne’s gaze was fixed on Dorothea. As the monk passed her he laid his wrinkled hand on her golden hair.

‘*Benedic, Domine*,’ he said softly. ‘My daughter, Christ is kind.’

The Count of Erbach, lingering after them, asked again:

‘You will not come?’ She shook her head wildly, and he went out with his eyes on the ground.

When they had gone, Prince Ludwig licked his lips and moved his chair to sit by her.

‘Ah, lass, I knew you loved me too well to leave me,’ he said softly, and put his arm round her. She sprang away from his touch.

‘Loved you?’ she cried, and laughed. ‘Loved you? Go, go; in God’s name, go!’ Prince Ludwig went out.

In the little guard-room the Capuchin was telling Karl of Erbach a plain story, without a twist of fact or phrase—the story of the Baron de Creil and his sentence.

'There is the story, Count,' he said at last; 'and as I tell it to you so I would have you tell it to the Prince of Solgau. Soon I myself will come to Solgau'—he paused and lowered his voice—'to treat of Ludwig von Lichtenstein. Till then, if it was a fool who spoke here for France, it shall be a fool no longer.' He pointed to Turenne, and Turenne, with his hand on the back of Père Joseph's chair, said slowly:

'And I promise the Marshal of Solgau that I will care for the Princess Dorothea as my own life and my own honour till the day when she is free from Ludwig von Lichtenstein—and after.'

'I trust the word of the Vicomte de Turenne,' said Karl; and he turned to the Capuchin. 'Sir, I think you speak true; I will tell your tale to the Prince of Solgau. But the heir of Solgau has been murdered by an officer of France in the castle of a French ally, and he may ask justice of France on the murderers.'

'There shall be justice,' said the Capuchin slowly; and Karl of Erbach rode away to Solgau. Père Joseph, sitting quietly in the guard-room staring at the wine-stained table, slowly passed his schemes through his mind, shifted the pawns on his board, and altered his game to play it without the aid of Prince Ludwig von Lichtenstein. And at last his thoughts strayed to the day when justice should be done for the murder; and he thought of his general, the fiery Duke of Weimar; he saw, in his mind, the fierce rush of Bernhard's men and the Lichtensteiners fleeing before them; he saw Bernhard's cold scorn of the coward who was Prince of Lichtenstein, and his grim face smiled.

But Père Joseph was only a man.

Because he was a man, suddenly, beneath all this, he remembered the shame on Dorothea's weary face, and the work of his own servant, the Baron de Creil.

'*Deus, Deus, propitius esto mihi peccatori!*' he muttered.

CHAPTER X.

OF THE VALUE OF VELVET.

AT Solgau the minister of France was a man quite unlike the Baron de Creil; save only in one thing—that men often thought him a fool. But the Comte de Lormont did not grow angry at their mistake; he smiled lazily at them and used it, till in time the men who had to do with him found to their surprise that the

Comte de Lormont was something more than fine clothes and a yawn and a smile.

On a warm December day the Comte de Lormont, who found the good people of Solgau a little tiresome, wandered carelessly down from the great gate of the castle to the pool, that is like the eyes of the Lady Yolande. He dusted the top of a dark slab of rock, and sat down gently.

'Ah!' he yawned. 'I wonder what Turenne is doing,' he thought to himself. 'Some day he will be a great man, the illustrious Henri. He believes everything is important; I never could. So he can think about everything; I never could. Most things are tiresome. Are all things tiresome? I believe not. I can think about some things. I wonder what that fellow is doing who hit our holy father back? He does not love us; and yet—I wonder—I wish he were on our side. But he believes in peace. Well, I should believe in peace if the war were in France. Ah! what is this?' There was a loud splash in the pool behind him. 'One of the good people of Solgau drowns himself in *ennui*?' He rose and walked lazily round the edge of the pool. 'My friend, you are too interested in your own salvation,' he said aloud. A little dog was splashing aimlessly in deep water and yelping. On the bank, leaning forward over the pool, stood a girl calling to it.

'Wulf, Wulf!' she cried. 'Oh, Wulf, Wulf!' and patted her dress. She looked round and saw Lormont. 'Help him, please; please, help him!' she said eagerly. Lormont bowed.

'Greater pleasure hath no man than this, mademoiselle,' said he, as he flung off his cloak and hat. He glanced down at his clothes with a rueful smile, and dived into the pool.

As he scrambled out with the spaniel in his hand, the little yelping beast snapped at him.

'Oh, Wulf, you ungrateful doggie!' cried his mistress, holding out her arms for him.

'We none of us like to be saved,' said the Comte de Lormont, while the water dripped from him to the ground. 'But, indeed, he is very wet, mademoiselle,' and he held Wulf at arm's length by the back of his neck, turning him slowly round. Wulf yelped and kicked. 'So we give thanks for salvation,' said Lormont placidly.

'Oh, but you hurt him,' cried the girl; 'please give him to me,' she held out her hands to Lormont. 'I thank you very much indeed, but please give him to me.'

'He drips,' said Lormont looking about him: 'ah, permit me, mademoiselle!' he caught up his grey velvet cloak, wrapped Wulf in it and handed the bundle to Wulf's mistress. She took it eagerly.

'Wulf, you bad doggie,' she said, and she kissed Wulf's cold nose and caressed him. Wulf decided to yelp no longer. Then his mistress looked up. 'Oh, so fine a cloak!' she said. 'I am so sorry'; but there was something besides regret in her voice and her eyes. Lormont noticed that they were brown, and deep and bright.

'Vanity, mademoiselle, vanity,' said Lormont solemnly and shook his head. The girl smiled at him, and a dimple came in her cheek.

'Wulf thanks you very much for your vanity, sir,' she said with a curtesy.

'I did not guess it,' said Lormont, and he glanced at his finger.

'Oh, but he does,' said the girl. 'I hope he has not hurt you,' and she put Wulf under one arm. Lormont held out his hand to her; she took it and looked anxiously at all the fingers, moving them softly apart.

'But I do not see anything,' she said at last, and while his hand still lay in hers she looked up into his face.

'Nor did I,' said the Comte de Lormont; and he met her eyes.

'Oh!' she cried, and she blushed and dropped his hand quickly.

'One sinner is rewarded,' said Lormont, with a wave of his hand to Wulf. Wulf growled. 'Consider the temptations of the other, and my poor cloak. The pool, mademoiselle, was wet; but I will not go till I am forgiven.'

'Oh, yes, and you will be cold and ill,' the girl said. 'Do not stay here, Monsieur le Comte. I—I will be kind to your cloak.' She looked at him roguishly, trying not to smile. Her little mouth twitched and quivered, her eyes sparkled with delight; a brighter colour had stolen into her cheeks.

Lormont sat stolidly down on a rock.

'I am very obstinate, mademoiselle,' said he; 'beyond doubt I shall be very ill; but I will have absolution before I die.'

The girl gave him a sidelong glance and then looked across the pool.

'You must indeed be very cold,' she murmured.

'I ought to be,' Lormont admitted, and she did not answer.

In a moment or two: 'But I want to go back to the castle, Monsieur le Comte,' she said plaintively.

'I will be buried here by the pool,' Lormont answered. 'I die in the only true faith; a sinner, penitent but unforgiven. Farewell, mademoiselle,' and he held out his hand. At first she watched him with a whimsical look on her face, and her head a little on one side. Then:

'Will you escort me back to the castle, Monsieur le Comte de Lormont?' she said, turning away from him. Lormont, looking at her straight lissome figure and its slender curves, sprang up and took her hand gently. She tried to draw it away, but his fingers closed on the wrist.

'Mademoiselle is merciful,' said he, and he swept off his hat, bowed over her hand and kissed it.

'Vanity, monsieur, vanity,' the girl murmured with downcast eyes.

'Still, it pleased—the dog,' said Lormont.

'The velvet is very fine,' she answered, and turned quickly to the cloak. 'But Wulf, ah Wulf, I am afraid it is ruined. And it must have been worth so much, monsieur.'

'I shall value it highly,' said Lormont, and he bowed.

'But he was very wet and his hair is so long—it is all stained,' said the girl sadly.

'But what, after all, is velvet, mademoiselle?' Lormont said slowly.

'Some think much of it, do they not, Monsieur le Comte?' she cried, and glanced at his dripping finery.

'I have at least spoilt them,' said he, following her eyes.

'Ah! it must grieve you, Monsieur le Comte!'

'Beyond doubt, it should grieve me,' said Lormont.

'Such charming velvet!' the girl cried quickly.

'And such cold water!' groaned Lormont.

'And the ribands are spoilt, too.'

'Too true, mademoiselle,' said Lormont, and he sighed. 'They were charming ribands!' She looked up at him sharply with a touch of scorn on her lip. 'Still you gave me your hand,' he said quietly, and his eyes looked into hers. She drew away from him.

'You took it, Monsieur le Comte,' she said coldly.

Lormont looked up to the heavens.

'I wonder if that is true,' he murmured. She stopped.

'Monsieur le Comte!' she cried angrily and stamped her foot.

'For if I thought I had taken it I should have to be sorry

for my velvet,' said Lormont quietly. He saw the colour darken her neck and a smile come over her face. 'Did I take it, mademoiselle?'

She was silent for a moment.

'I—I am glad you are not sorry for your velvet, Monsieur le Comte,' she said with one quick laughing glance.

And Lormont—who, having got what he wanted, should have yawned—sighed as he thought that he was too wet to touch her. They had come almost to the gate of the castle.

'Yes, that is my name,' said Lormont quickly. 'But indeed, mademoiselle, you are wiser than I. I have never heard yours.'

'Oh, that is likely, monsieur,' she answered with a toss of her head. 'It is folly,' and she walked on quickly with her little chin held high.

'You wrong it, mademoiselle,' said Lormont confidently.

'I may judge my own name,' she answered.

'You may not slander it,' said Lormont quietly. She started and looked at him defiantly. 'But indeed, mademoiselle, this is not fair; I am Léon de Lormont, as you know. Is it fair that I should not know your name?'

'You may know it,' she cried quickly. 'I am called Amaryllis. Is it not a foolish name? Prince Eberhard gave it me.'

Lormont grasped at the chance.

'Amaryllis,' he said slowly, looking down at her face with a smile. 'Amaryllis—Amaryllis. Indeed, it is a charming name. Amaryllis,' he repeated softly.

She smiled a little and blushed.

'It appears to please you, monsieur,' she said. They had reached the castle. 'And indeed I will do what I can for your cloak. And I thank you.' She swept him a curtsy.

Lormont bowed very low and Amaryllis tripped away. In her own room she took Wulf out of his cloak and spread it carefully on a chair. Then, as she rubbed the little spaniel dry, she hid her face in his hair:

'Oh Wulf, Wulf, I wonder what you have done?' she whispered, and kissed him. She set the dog down and rolled him over on the floor. 'Wulf, you sad, sad doggie,' she said, and her laughing face was red.

The Comte de Lormont walked slowly across the courtyard.

'So that is the sister of the Lady Yolande,' he said aloud.

He called his servant and the man followed him up the stairs.

'Ah, but monsieur is wet,' he cried anxiously.

'Yes, I suppose so,' said the Comte de Lormont.

'Monsieur has fallen in——?' asked the servant with a gesture towards the pool.

'Yes, that is so,' said the Comte de Lormont.

CHAPTER XI.

THE TIDINGS THAT CAME TO SOLGAU.

KARL OF ERBACH had come back to Solgau. His men stood in the courtyard telling their news to an anxious, startled crowd. The Comte de Lormont as he passed through them met many an angry look, and one rough trooper did not move to let him pass. Lormont tapped him gently on the shoulder:

'You are troublesome, my friend,' said he; 'that is foolish.' The man, turning with an oath, met Lormont's cool proud stare and drew back; and Lormont, seeing the Baron von Schwartzsee, changed his path.

'Is there news, my dear Baron?' he asked. The Baron turned, saw he was a Frenchman, and frowned.

'Prince Maximilian has been murdered by your friends and the Prince von Lichtenstein.' Lormont stood silent for a moment.

'My friends do not murder, Baron,' he said coldly.

'Oh, curse your quibbles,' cried the Baron, and told the story. Lormont, tapping gently on the ground with his foot, listened without questioning. The Baron, ended, looked at Lormont's calm face.

'Ay, you care little,' he said with a sneer.

'Your master, Prince Ludwig, is the wickedest fool in Europe,' said Lormont quietly with a sharp ring in his voice. 'Some day I shall tell him so.' But the Baron von Schwartzsee thought Lormont a fool.

In the castle Prince Eberhard welcomed the Count of Erbach amid the crowd of courtiers who had kept Christmas at Solgau. He sat in the great hall of Solgau, high on the dais in his gilded chair, and his nobles stood round him. On the dark oak panels hung the bright arms of the men who had held rule in Solgau; the old princes who had dealt now justly, now unjustly, by their people, who had wrought in folly and cruelty sometimes, but had never faltered or played the coward. That was the glory of Solgau.

'Ah, Karl, back from the wars, then! So you have come back to tell us—tell us——' cried the Prince.

'I have brought tidings to your Highness,' said Karl gravely—'bad tidings.' A dusty ray of light poured down on his firm, strong face.

'Ay, Karl? Indeed, indeed? Bad tidings from you?'

'Weissberg has fallen to the enemy,' said Karl.

'What, what? Weissberg?' stammered Prince Eberhard. 'And Max? What of Max? Speak, Karl, in God's name! What of Max?' His voice broke into a scream.

'Prince Maximilian reached Lichtenstein,' said Karl, and Prince Eberhard gasped in relief. Very quickly Karl went on. 'Then he was tried by two officers of France in the presence of Ludwig von Lichtenstein for the loss of the town. He was beheaded yesterday in the castle of Lichtenstein.'

A low, hoarse murmur ran among the nobles of Solgau. 'Lichtenstein, Lichtenstein,' and they looked angrily at one another, and hands sought sword hilts.

'Beheaded?' cried the old man. 'Max, my son, beheaded? Max is dead at Lichtenstein? My boy, my boy!' he rocked himself to and fro in his chair, murmuring the words again and again. Karl stood looking down and waiting. At last the old man raised his head.

'And you stood by—you did nothing!' he cried. Karl drew himself up.

'I did not hear of it till the thing was done,' he said. 'When I heard I went at once to Lichtenstein.'

'Yes, yes, and you killed him?' cried the old man.

'No, your Highness, I——' and he stopped: he remembered that Dorothea had bidden him say nothing of her to her father. 'I came to tell you,' he ended lamely.

'To tell me?' cried Prince Eberhard. 'A Prince of Solgau is murdered and you—you—you come to tell me?' There was a stir in the little throng of courtiers and many sneering faces turned to Karl of Erbach as he stood alone facing the old Prince.

'The Marshal of Solgau,' some one whispered loud enough for Karl to hear, and an ill-meant laugh passed round. The old man sprang up wild with grief.

'Marshal of Solgau,' he cried, 'ay, Marshal of Solgau. Your Prince is murdered and you come back with your sword clean, so brave is the Marshal of Solgau—so brave, so brave,' he repeated

trembling. He pressed his hand to his head. 'Ah! and Dorothea, she is there, too, in that devil's hands.' He looked at Karl for an answer, but Karl said nothing. He could not speak of the Princess Dorothea. Prince Eberhard laughed. 'What is a Princess to the Marshal of Solgau?' He pointed at Karl with a long, thin finger, and laughed again as he fell back in his chair.

Karl stood silent before him, fronting the bitter sneering faces of the men and women who saw in him only a convicted coward.

'But, indeed, he loves his office,' one of them whispered again.

'Man, why do you cheat me?' cried the Prince. 'If you march with my power and in my name, why—why—and my boy is dead!' He hid his face in his hands.

And Karl of Erbach stood still and silent, bearing the insults and the sneers with grim, set face. He saw clearly enough the easier path; how he might give up his place with one fierce answer to insult and sneer, follow the war, leading his own men from Erbach, and let Solgau and its Prince go their own way. But he would not do it, and the nobles of Solgau thought him therefore a mean coward.

'Speak,' cried the old man again. 'Give it up; let me choose another; let me have a man—a man——' and there was a murmur again in the crowd.

'I am Marshal of Solgau, your Highness,' said Karl, and the Baron von Rosenberg stepped quickly forward and bent over Prince Eberhard.

'Your Highness speaks too quickly; the news has been too much for your Highness. Will you not think of it again on the morrow?'

'The morrow?' cried Prince Eberhard. 'There is no morrow now—only—only——'

'Your Highness has borne too much; you were better alone.'

'Ah, yes!' cried the old man. 'Better, better; leave me alone,' and unwillingly they went out.

Karl pushed through the crowd of enemies, and a man said in his face: 'So Solgau is shamed!' And as Karl went by in silence the man laughed. He went back to his own old room and sat down to think. He would not yield to distrust and insult. They thought he clung to the honours of his place as marshal. Let them think. He cared too much for Solgau to give it up because some of its people were fools. He would do his work; and the rest was no affair of his. The Baron von Rosenberg burst in on him.

'You'll keep it, Karl?' he said gruffly.

'Ay!' The Baron looked at him keenly.

'They don't trust you.'

'I know,' said Karl; he looked up and met the other man's eyes. 'I trust myself; and, by God, I will go on to the end.'

'So!' said the Baron von Rosenberg. 'Then go back to the army. God knows what the old man will do. And Karl, Karl'—he caught at the younger man's arm—'kill us Ludwig von Lichtenstein.'

'Do you think I love him?' said Karl. He sat silent for a moment. 'The Baron von Schwartzsee goes with my men to hold his castle against Ludwig. I go back to Bernhard. The Frenchman Turenne cares for Dorothea'—he paused—'and I will not shame Solgau,' he said slowly. He rose, and the Baron held out his hand. Karl's stern face lightened a little as he took it, and he gripped it hard.

As he went down the stairs he met Yolande; she looked away from him and drew her dress close round her. But Karl stood across her way, and looked into her angry eyes.

'Yolande, I do not say you are wrong. I see how you think of me. Will you wait before you judge me?' he said quietly.

'Wait?' she said in a low scornful voice. 'Can there be worse to hear?'

'If you meet me so I make no answer,' he said proudly. 'Yolande, I only ask you for justice—wait till all this work is done.'

'What can there be to wait for from you?' she cried. 'The Count of Erbach is known well enough—so wise, so proud, so brave!'

Karl bowed his head gravely.

'I am answered,' said he. 'Some day, lady, you shall know you are wrong. And for what has been—if I could have done aught yesterday at Lichtenstein, on my honour I say I would have done it!'

'Your—honour,' she said; 'your—honour!'

(To be continued.)

At the Sign of the Ship.

SIR LAUDER BRUNTON, with great courage, recently proclaimed himself a believer in water-finding by the divining rods, and gave his reasons. They merely amount to this: that he accepts the word of living and honourable witnesses, well known to himself, who possess the faculty. They 'seem to have a peculiar power of appreciating moisture, though they themselves cannot tell by what sense they do so.' 'The vague sense gives rise to slight involuntary movements whereby the rod in their hand moves.' This is so certain that some water-finders use no rod at all, but trust to their sensations only. For reasons which I have stated elsewhere, this theory does not seem quite adequate, but what interests me is the curious analogue of the divining hand used by some Australian tribes.

* * *

Arid as are the regions inhabited by these tribes, one never hears that they employ the rod for water-finding. What they do is gruesome. They cut off and dry the hand of a corpse, which they call a *brett*, tie it to a string of opossum-hair, and hang it round the neck so that it is under their left arm. When an enemy is near the dead hand pushes or pinches the wearer. He then hangs the hand by the string in front of his face, and says, 'Speak! Where are they? Speak, or I throw you to the wild dogs!' Perhaps this is addressed to the spirit of the dead owner of the hand, perhaps only to the hand itself, just as people speak to *planchette*. The hand responds by vibrating in some direction whence danger is supposed to be approaching. 'My informants,' Mr. A. W. Howitt writes, 'tell me that the vibrations were often so violent that the hand would almost "come over on to the holder."' (The story is in *Kamilaroi and Kurnai*, p. 244.)

* * *

Now, this answers to the movements of the divining rod, the swaying of the dead hand being, of course, produced by the unconscious action of the living hand. But a nearer parallel is the use of a ring, suspended from a thread, and held over an empty tumbler. The ring sways, and finally tells the time of day by chiming out the hour, so many strokes on the glass. It is guided, of course, by the knowledge, or guess, of the person who holds the thread. Any piece of wood, of course, would sway just as the *brett*, or dead hand, sways, but the *brett* appeals to savage superstitions. During the siege of Mafeking the newspapers reported that an Englishman of Plumer's command was guided into the town, through the Boer lines, by a native who used a divining rod to detect the presence of the enemy. If this was true, the rod, in this case, combined the functions of the rod with those of the Australian *brett*.

* * *

Sir Lauder conjectures that if Mohammed, that famed prophet, had taken a good firm dose of bromide he might not have had a 'photism,' or vision of light, followed by other visions, which resulted in his doctrine and mission. This is very well, but, given bromide, St. Paul, by parity of reasoning, would not have been converted, nor would Colonel Gardiner, nor Pascal; and Joan of Arc, who started with a 'photism,' or vision of light, would not have saved France, nor would Napoleon have seen his star; and so, with bromide enough, history would have been turned upside down. We might have had no Christianity, as well as no Islam, and France might be part of the celebrated British Empire. This leads some minds to sceptical inferences, repudiated, with correct logic, by Sir Lauder Brunton. Still, one is glad that bromide was not freely administered to neurotic persons of genius, St. Paul, Joan of Arc, Socrates, Cromwell, Julius Cæsar, St. Francis, and many others. But I should not be sorry if Mohammed and Napoleon had been bromidised within an inch of their lives, they not being on my side. As a rule, persons of genius have been subject to very queer conditions, of a more or less epileptoid kind, like Shelley and Tennyson (as far as trances go), and even douce Sir Walter Scott. *Les hystériques menent le monde*, says a French writer. Luther was in this line, and it is unlucky that bromide had not been discovered in his case; a little of it would have done him no harm. But may we be preserved from 'a visual appearance which sometimes precedes a

sick headache,' as in a coloured illustration of Sir Lauder's. What you see is like a sketch of a fortification in the style of Vauban, a zigzaggy, forked-lightning affair, in white, blue, green, red, and yellow, on black, with a circular central redoubt in the same colours.

* * *

'Do you want Clippings?' This question is constantly put to us by advertising agencies. Personally speaking, I do not want Clippings. Where the fun is in hearing every word of the great Whispering Gallery of the Press one cannot imagine. Yet, an agency tells us, 'we are sending clippings now to most of the leading authors of the United States and England.' The authors must be very curious to know what the *Galveston Herald* or the *Kelso Mail* is saying about them. Some amateur sent me a Clipping to the effect that I was not beloved in Boston, Mass. Valuable information—as if I cared for what was thought about me in Boston, and another place associated with it by Charles Baudelaire. Besides, the citizens of Boston cannot possibly care a red cent about me. 'We read about 1,200 newspapers a day, and between 700 and 800 weekly and monthly magazines,' say the Clippers. Even in that other place (associated, invidiously, with Boston, Mass., by Baudelaire) such studies would be deemed too cruelly penal. Five cents a Clipping is the market price, so, for five dollars, one could purchase 100 printed impertinences.

* * *

'Do you want Clippings about Christian Science, Forestry, Trusts, Taxation (*cheu !*), Imperialism, Capital Punishment, Polar Exploration, the Philippines, Voting Machines, Wireless Telegraphy, Vaccination, Heroism?' No, I can honestly say that I do *not* want Clippings on any of these themes, nor even about Mrs. Gallup. That lady's replies to Mr. Marston and other critics have been sent to me by her publishers, Messrs. Gay & Bird, from whom no doubt they may be purchased. It is proper to say this, as Mrs. Gallup appears to have written a recent defence of her theory, under the impression that her replies, to which she referred, had been already published in several English journals, to which she had sent them. These serials had not published them, so persons who wish to hear her *apologia* may send for her pamphlet.

* * *

Young authors ought to be very careful. There lies before me a novel which has all the appearance of being a new novel by a well-known writer. One of the chapters is headed 'The Spectre Hound.' I read it; but no, it was not the Hound of the Baskervilles. It is rather a crude and noisy book, but the author informs the Press that he wrote it long ago—as a kind of 'pot-boiler,' apparently; that it is, of course, far from new, that he did not want it to be republished, especially without a hint of its antiquity. But he has no remedy, and no means of stopping the republication, as far as appears. Another sorrow is this: I lately bought an excellent book on a theme far from popular. It was published, I think, in 1896, but the copy sent to me bore the date '1902.' Yet there was not a word that I could find as to this example being of a new edition. Not an alteration seemed to have been made, though, as the science treated of has advanced, alterations were to be expected, and even to be welcomed. Yet the date was given as '1902.' Is this kind of thing fair to reader, writer, or bibliographer? The book, for all that one can make out, is *not* a book of 1902, so why allege that it is?

* * *

A literary mare's nest has been strangely found by *The Academy*, with the aid of a misprint and 'an Edinburgh Correspondent.' This gentleman was said to have announced that a German edition of Scott's works was published at Twickenham, in 1819, by the brothers Schumann, and that the author of the preface to the *Lay* spoke of Scott as the author of the Waverley Novels. There was nothing in *that*: people all but universally recognised Sir Walter in 'The Great Unknown'; moreover, he had convicted himself by a piece of evidence which would have satisfied a jury. In *Rob Roy* his Baillie Nicol Jarvie delivers a long speech on the state of the Highlands, a discourse full of statistics. But that speech is merely adapted from a Gartmore MS. published by Jamieson in his Introduction to Burt's 'Letters from the North.' Now, Jamieson expressly thanks 'Mr. Walter Scott' for the loan of this Gartmore MS., whereof the Baillie's speech is a faithful reproduction. It follows that the author of *Rob Roy* is the owner of the Gartmore MS.—that is, Mr. Walter Scott. I know not whether anyone remarked these facts before I did, except Jamieson. He *must* have known, and he quarrelled with Scott—a quarrel of his own making. Thus the authorship of the novels was matter of actual knowledge, as well as of almost

universal belief. Nobody doubted, except the kind of people who believe that Bacon wrote *The Faery Queen*.

* * *

But that 'a Twickenham publisher' should have printed Scott in 1819, only the writer in *The Academy* could believe. A critic in *The Dundee Advertiser* at once pointed out that Zwickau, not Twickenham, was the abode of the piratical German brethren Schumann.

* * *

The Academy, on August 2, corrected itself in the following odd paragraph :

'By an unfortunate misprint last week, in the paragraph about what was known as to the real authorship of the "Waverley Novels" in 1819, the German edition of the English text of Scott's works, instead of being published, as stated, at *Twickenham*, should have been at Zwickau in Saxony. It might further be stated that the correction of the press in the reprint is mentioned as "by an Englishman," presumably the J. M. P^d who supplies the prefatory note on Walter Scott, and who adds all the "Waverley Novels" published within at least two years of 1819. The printer is Joseph Englemann of Heidelberg. Here is a copy of the title :

THE WORKS OF WALTER SCOTT, ESQ.

Vol. I.

THE LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL.

A Poem in 6 Cantoes.

ZWICKAU.

Printed for Brothers Schumann.

1819.'

The style is rather elliptical. 'The German edition . . . should have been at Zwickau.' 'Should have been described as published at Zwickau' appears to be intended. The edition *was* at Zwickau.

* * *

Mr. Legge, in an essay on dreams, in the same periodical, cites Alfred Maury's remarkable dream 'that he was about to be

guillotined, and woke up to find that a lath from the head of the bed had fallen and was pressing upon his neck.' Maury's dream was much more curious than one might guess from this compressed version. His mother was in the room, watching him as he slept; what she saw was a lath, or something of that kind, fall and touch Maury's neck, when he *instantly* awoke. But his dream had comprised a whole chapter from the Reign of Terror. He dreamed that he was suspected, arraigned before the Revolutionary tribunal, tried, condemned, and taken to execution, the whole affair occupying, at least, many hours. But, as Maury saw, what happened was this: he felt, in sleep, the touch on his neck. His sleeping self asked itself, 'What is this?' and replied by the long and (he says) coherent dream-myth, containing vivid experiences occupying, if not days, at least a great portion of a day. And through all these emotions Maury passed in the fraction of a second between the touch on his neck and his complete return to waking consciousness. The interest of this dream, and others, lies in the dramatic power of the sleeping self, which actually constructs, stages, and acts out a long story explanatory of a real sensation, literally 'in the twinkling of an eye.' Manifestly the dream self is a dramatist of force far beyond the power of the waking self. Shakespeare could not have constructed that plot, in the given time, when awake. In short, the dreaming self, like the soul in Mr. Matthew Arnold's poem,

Did not know the bond of Time
Nor feel the manacles of Space,

a fact which *donne à penser* as to the nature of space and time, 'mere hallucinations,' as the late Lord Bute once remarked to myself. The inferences may lead us far away beyond the ordinary philosophy of dreaming. Many people are curious on this matter, but few or none seem to read Karl du Prel's *Philosophy of Mysticism*, of which there is an excellent English translation. M. du Prel enlarged freely on this matter of 'dream as dramatist,' and on 'real and ideal time.' Parts of his commentary, and some of his facts, are 'tough,' but his book is most interesting. Naturally we must remember that we all, unconsciously, 'edit' our dreams, and are apt to fill up and omit—'eik and pare,' as the old Scots phrase runs.

* * *

Occasionally there are witnesses to some of the facts, like Madame Maury. Thus, a young lady of my friends lately danced

most of the night at a ball, and next day went on a short railway journey. She was reading *Lavengro* in the train; she fell asleep, and dreamed that she was boating on a lake well known to her. She saw her sister drowning in the lake, tied a rope to the rowlock, and threw the loose end to her sister. On this she awoke, and found that, when she thought she was throwing a rope to a drowning sister, she had really flung *Lavengro* (a pretty heavy volume) at the head of a lady sitting opposite her—a perfect stranger! Explanations to a railway-carriageful of people followed.

* * *

Mr. Legge quotes M. Lorain to the effect that clever people who use their brains a good deal dream cleverer dreams than 'children, women, and handicraftsmen,' so he 'rather ungallantly puts it.' I wonder if this is true? Are the clever people not more adroit in 'editing' their dreams after they waken? It would not be easy to collect statistics. To myself it seems that I only remember the dreams which occur in the moment of waking, when a fair amount of the waking self must be interfering with the vision. This morning I dreamed something about The Origin of Exogamy! It seemed very satisfactory, at the moment, and the origin of Exogamy appeared as an amiable result of the purest emotions of our nature. But that idea can hardly bear the light of waking reflection.

* * *

Mr. Legge appears, if I understand him, to suppose that our dreams are always a kaleidoscopic combination of actual experiences. 'It is said that no woman ever dreams of entertaining persons utterly unknown to her.' On this point ladies may speak for themselves; but surely we do dream of places and faces which no effort of memory, at least, can bring back to us as parts of waking experience in the past. But they may be, in the future! Thus A tells me (and, like Mr. Tracey Romford, he 'would not lie if it were ever so') that he dreamed of a particular part of the exterior of an Elizabethan house, built of brick, and that he there found some entomological specimens of considerable rarity. Years afterwards, on going to a new home, a house which he certainly had never seen before, he recognised the corner of the building observed in his dream, but he never yet has found there the entomological specimens. B in the same way, dreamed of seeing, in a corry of the hills near Loch Leven (the salt-water Loch

Leven), a peculiar tree, with the top boughs flattened down like a table. B later came across the tree, but in a corry of Ben Cruachan. Mr. Legge, I daresay, will explain such facts on the 'two-shoot' memory system. A and B never really dreamed of the corner of the house, or of the queer tree, but, on seeing them, had the feeling of having 'been there before,' and then *fancied* that they had dreamed of the objects, the entomological specimens being merely part of the unconscious fable. One thing I can swear to—that, in the visions beheld with shut eyes, before sleep, one does see faces and places that never were present in our waking experience, as well as others that have been present. Alfred Maury was very strongly convinced on this point. It will be replied that such faces and places are only 'kaleidoscopic combinations' of actual experiences, like the centaur—half-horse, half-man. But the person who sees them feels prepared to take his affidavit that this is not so—that these experiences are originals, not refractions. The sceptic will say 'Pooh pooh!' (at least on paper—nobody ever *says* 'Pooh pooh!'), and there is the end of the matter.

* * *

Nobody ever, perhaps, said *Tush!* in real life. They say *Tush!* in the Bible, and in historical novels, but, as a matter of fact, *tush* seems to be an attempt to reproduce an inarticulate and unspellable interjection of impatience, really more like *titz*, or the Scottish 'toots, man!'

* * *

I marvel what Mr. John Morley will do with Lord Acton's library, presented to him by the modern Comte de Monte Cristo, Mr. Andrew Carnegie. The books, some 100,000 volumes, would rather overcrowd, say, the library of Dorchester House, or of a great country house. If the donor would add, as he easily might, a palace for the accommodation of Mr. Morley, everyone would be delighted. Mr. Carnegie has only to rub Aladdin's lamp, or ring, and the thing is done. Meanwhile the donor is rather like the generous geni of Mr. Anstey's story, 'The Brass Bottle.' It is as if he had given the Archbishop of Canterbury a lot of eminent racehorses but no stables. By the way, if a horse called Greatrakes (or Greatorex) is entered for the Derby of 1903, be on him to the utmost extent of your available capital. This advice is derived from a tip given in a dream, and reported to me. I do not know who owns the steed (if he exists), but here is a chance

of testing a dream, a very 'previous' dream. This is a violent digression. I return to Mr. Morley. Lord Acton's books, to a great extent, must be ecclesiastical. If Mr. Morley reads them, who knows but that, on a mind so fair as his, an edifying impression may be made. He may be reconciled to the Vatican. If any Monte Cristo of the day thinks of imitating Mr. Carnegie, in my case, may I adjure him to let me select a small cabinet of really good first editions of a few French and English works in *belles lettres*? He might also offer to the London Library a *reference* library, to be studied in the premises of that institution, and never to be lent out. That is what we really need more than scores of 'free libraries,' which are of very little use to the serious student—rather a rare bird. It seems an absurd thing to say: but the difficulty of getting at serious books, in London, is unspeakably great. To go to the British Museum occupies about an hour; to procure the books wanted, if the Museum happens to possess them, and if they are not at the binders', takes up your time till the hour of luncheon. Nobody can work after luncheon, and there you are! As for the London Library, if it does own the book you want, the odds are that some one else has already borrowed it. Besides, borrowing books is, with me, synonymous with mislaying them, so that one can never find them when they are needed. For these reasons a Monte Cristo who pities the learned has a noble chance of helping them at the cost of only a million or two. Books are maddening things. How in the world am I to get a tract by Miss Alice Fletcher, 'separately published at Salem, Mass.,' say the records of the British Association. Separately published by *whom*? I cannot get on without Miss Fletcher's tract, but can I write, 'To the Mayor, Salem, Mass.,' and ask him for it point-blank? If the Salem witches were still in the land they might know how to get at this invaluable treatise, but it would be cruel to pester the worthy mayor, if there *is* a mayor, at Salem, Mass. Perhaps he has quite a different title. If one addresses

The Chief Bookseller,
Salem,
Mass.,

it sounds invidious. The Post Office would have to choose who is the Chief Bookseller, and *he* may not have the tract 'in stock.' It is not a 'summer novel'; and what bookseller keeps learned treatises on specially abstruse subjects? An American critic

hath accused me of not citing American works on Miss Fletcher's and other unpopular themes. The truth is, that it is most difficult to get hold of these books, in many cases. It is even more difficult to procure scores of papers in the proceedings of foreign learned societies, and theses for the doctor's degree at foreign universities. A few millions judiciously laid out by a generous geni might make less laborious the life of the erudite, and might help science onwards more rapidly.

ANDREW LANG.

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